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Golden Dragon Fantasy Gamebooks

Crypt of the Vampire

The Temple of Flame **Dave Morris and** Oliver Johnson

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THE

TEMPLE

OF

FLAME

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DRAGON

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To Yve

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INTRODUCTION

Imagine what it would be like if you were someone like Indiana Jones, or Conan the Barbarian, or Luke Skywalker. Rather than merely sitting back and watching the adventures of these heroes, you could actually experience the thrill and danger at first hand. All that stood between you and certain death would be your own skill and daring, and the decisions you made.

In Golden Dragon Fantasy Gamebooks, you ARE the hero.

You are a skilled adventurer who has roamed over much of the known world. In your yearning for constant challenge and the excitement of battle you have fought goblins, giants, trolls, ogres, dragons, evil wizards and many other strange and terrifying opponents. And you have always won.

The years of adventure have honed your reflexes and fighting skill so that few men could stand against you in single combat.

To determine just how good an adventurer you are, you must use the dice:

Roll two dice. Add 20 to this number and enter the total in the VIGOUR box on your Character Sheet. This score represents your strength, fitness and general will to survive. Any wounds you take on your quest are subtracted from your VIGOUR score - if it ever reaches zero you are dead.

Roll one die. Add 3 to the number rolled and never exceed its original value. This is your *normal* enter the total in the PSI box on your Character VIGOUR score, and you must keep a careful note Sheet. The higher this score, the better you are at of it.

resisting spells cast at you and the more sensitive Your AGILITY and PSI are less likely to change, you are to psychic impressions.

although this is possible. Spraining your ankle, for Roll one die, add 3 and enter the total in the example, might reduce your AGILITY by 1 point.

AGILITY box. This score reflects how nimble you A magic helmet might increase your PSI. But, as are. You will need a high AGILITY to scale walls, with VIGOUR, your AGILITY and PSI must never leap across chasms, and so forth.

exceed their normal scores unless you are speci-fically told otherwise.

YOUR NAME

Try to personalize your adventuring persona by thinking of a heroic name. You might call yourself Lucas Starkiller or Sir Bergan the Bold, Lady Angela Centauri or Li Chun the Black Dragon, or any other name you can think of. Imagine what sort of adventurer you are first - a noble knight, a crafty rogue, a dashing swordsman or a rugged Viking, perhaps - and then choose a name to reflect that. Try looking at the BACKGROUND to the adventure first; it may give you some ideas.

VIGOUR, AGILITY and PSI

Your VIGOUR will change constantly during the adventure - every time you are wounded, in fact.

You may find healing potions in the Temple of Katak. These will resore some of the VIGOUR

points you have lost owing to wounds - but unless you are told otherwise, your VIGOUR score must

Fill in the character sheet in pencil *so* that you can rub it out for **COMBAT - HOW TO FIGHT THE**

future adventures. You may prefer to copy the character sheet **OCCUPANTS OF THE TEMPLE**

on to a separate piece of paper.

CHARACTER SHEET

Often during the course of your adventure you will come across a creature or human enemy whom Character's Name:

you must fight. When this happens, you will be VIGOUR

ITEMS

told to roll the dice. The number you roll will Current score:

magic sword

determine whether you wound your opponent or *armour*

whether he - or it - wounds you.

knife

backpack

A typical entry might read like this: *hipflask of water*

AGILITY

Current score:

87

The Ogre hefts his axe and advances towards you. You have no escape route, and must fight.

PSI

Current score:

OGRE VIGOUR 10

Roll two dice:

score 2 to 5 You are hit and lose 3 VIGOUR

ENCOUNTER BOXES

points

OPPONENT

OPPONENT

score 6 to 12 The Ogre loses 3 VIGOUR points VIGOUR

VIGOUR

If you defeat the Ogre, turn to **45**.

OPPONENT

OPPONENT

At the start of every combat, you should note VIGOUR

VIGOUR

down your opponent's VIGOUR score in an empty Encounter Box. You must roll two dice and deduct points from either yourself or your opponent OPPONENT

OPPONENT

depending on the score. If both you and your VIGOUR

VIGOUR

opponent still have VIGOUR scores of more than 0, you must continue to roll the dice until the OPPONENT

OPPONENT

VIGOUR score of either you or your opponent is VIGOUR

VIGOUR

reduced to 0 - indicating death.

ESCAPING FROM COMBAT

YOUR ADVENTURE

In some cases you may start a fight and then find You are now almost ready to embark on your yourself losing badly. If you are told that you can adventure. You should start at 1 and then proceed FLEE from the combat then you may choose that to further entries according to the decisions you option. Your opponent will, however, attempt to make.

strike at your unguarded back as you turn away.

Be warned: this adventure is not easy. You are To represent this you should roll two dice; if the highly unlikely to find the idol of Katak on your total exceeds your AGILITY score then you have first attempt. Make a map as you explore the been hit (lose 3 VIGOUR points) as you flee, but if temple. If you get killed, fill in a new Character the dice roll is less than or equal to your AGILITY

Sheet and try again, using the map you made score then you dodge your opponent's parting before to guide you. It may take you several blow and manage to escape without further injury.

attempts, but eventually you will win through to confront your enemy Damontir in a battle for the gold idol of the flame-god!

And now - the adventure begins . . .

ITEMS

While exploring the temple and the jungle around it you will collect a number of ITEMS. Some of these may be needed later in your quest, although others may turn out to be useless or even harmful.

You should fill ITEMS in on your Character Sheet as you acquire them and cross them off as they are used up.

At the start of your adventure you have the following ITEMS:

a magic sword; a suit of armour; a knife; a flask or water; a backpack in which to carry further items.

These are already listed on your Character Sheet.

BACKGROUND

There were three of you in the dark, damp chamber - you, Valedor and the man known as Damontir the Mad. The mists of Time disperse and seem to fly away as the scene comes sharply into focus before you again. Around you are the crumbling statues and peeling murals of that forgotten tomb.

Your comrades at arms, brave knights of Palados, are stiffening corpses pierced by steel or crushed by stone somewhere in the crypts and tunnels above.

Valedor holds forth his sword and a bright lance of light illuminates a carbuncle on the face of the grotesquely carved sarcophagus. Damontir lurks mysteriously in the shadows. Suddenly there is a click and the lid of the sarcophagus swings up to reveal a bejewelled crown on the brow of the mummified corpse within. But the light from Valedor's enchanted sword has activated an ancient trap, and before you can move towards the treasure, the ground beneath you gives way and you begin to fall. You reach out and just manage to seize hold of the lip of the dark pit, but Valedor disappears into the depths with a piteous scream.

You cry out to Damontir to help you. With a warm feeling of gratitude you sense him standing over you in the darkness. Then the warmth turns to a chill as you see the flash of his teeth in a wicked smile. His booted foot crunches down on your

desperately clutching fingers. You can hold on no azure sky. You call to the sailors to lower the sail longer - you fall back into the void, blackness and drop anchor. Noon approaches - the hour reaching towards you . . .

which the ancient texts appoint as propitious for You come awake with a start, the pounding of beginning the quest. Your steward reverently fas-your heart sounding in your ears like a jungle tens the buckles and clasps of your armour - for drumbeat. You are soaked in sweat and have to you are the Dragon Knight of Palados, greatest struggle to free yourself from the blanket that warrior of the known world. He is barely able to lift clings to your body. From outside comes the twit-your gleaming broadsword, though you take it tering of exotic birds and the flash of dawn sun-from him and swing it without effort before sliding light off the river as your ship gently wends its way it into your scabbard. In the white, staring faces of upstream. You have merely dreamt how, many the sailors you read awe and a little fear. You climb years earlier, the sorcerer Damontir nearly put an down into the rowboat by the ship's side and, end to your life - how, instead of following Vale-standing at its prow, call for your men to cast off.

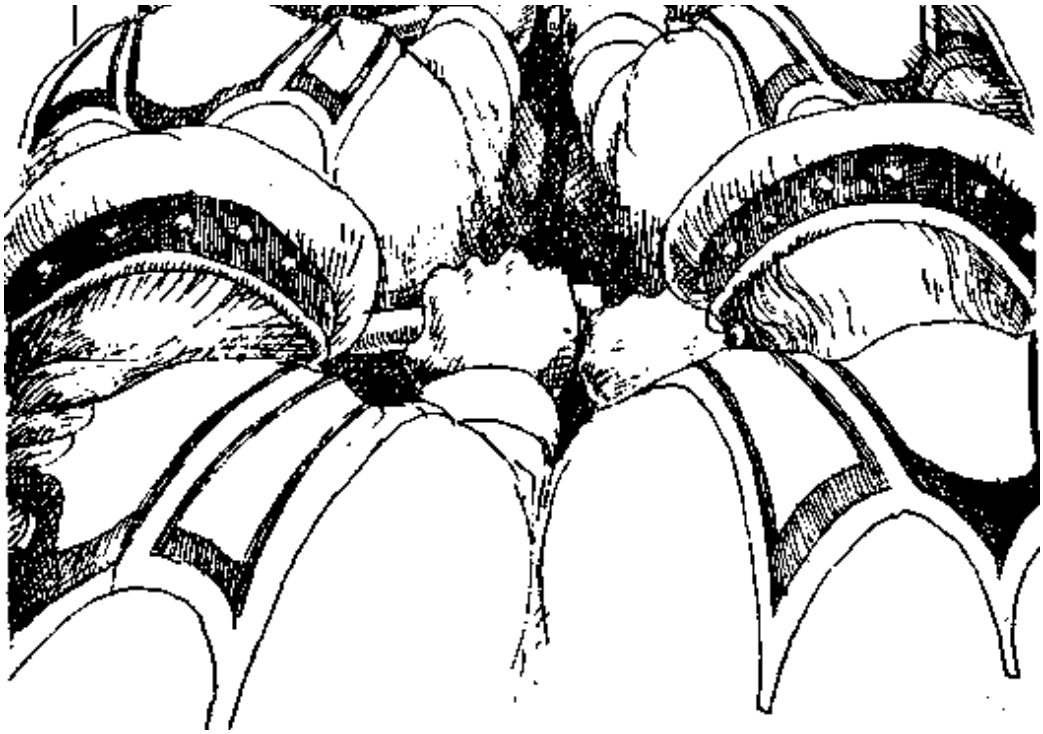
dor into the abyss, your fall was broken by a As the rowers stretch and grunt over their oars, hidden ledge; how, though badly wounded, you you concentrate on what lies ahead: the temple of climbed back to the tomb chamber to find the the flame god, Katak, lost for eons in the mosquito-crown and Damontir gone. Silently, you repeat the ridden depths of the forest, obscured by vines and vow you have made to yourself every morning creepers, surrounded by impenetrable swamp.

since that far-off day: never to rest until you have Only a mouldering libram in the archives of avenged yourself upon the evil sorcerer.

Achtan, capital of great Palados, revealed the hints The green banks of the jungle slide past you on and clues which enabled you to deduce the tem-either side. Occasionally a long, black shape laun-ple's location.

ches into the water with a dull splash and drifts A dark shadow obscures the sun. You look up; it idly towards the ship. The sailors mutter that the is only the first of the branches overhanging the crocodiles of Anku can bite a man in half. The river as your boat approaches the bank. According crocodiles stare up at you with blinking inscrutabil-to the age-stooped librarian in Achtan, one other ity, then drift off like logs in the muddy ochre person had consulted the book from which you water. Brightly coloured birds screech and cavort gleaned your information. And he had visited the over the treetops. The wind slackens as you pass a archives just a few weeks before you. The old bend in the river. Ahead, rising straight out of the librarian could not, however, recall the man's face shimmering water, stands a thin spire of crystal

- as though a magic spell had been used to cloud reaching up almost a hundred metres into the his memory. You ponder this as you step nimbly



from the boat. The rowers look around nervously at the rustling treetops where brilliantly hued parrots fly and monkeys crash from branch to branch. 'Watch this spot,' you tell them. 'I will signal you from here when my quest is over and I have the golden idol of Katak!' With obvious relief, they push away from the bank and head back to midstream where the ship lies at anchor. You take a last look, then turn and make your way into the waiting jungle . . .

NOW TURN TO **1**

1

In the depths of the jungle, the thick canopy of foliage filters the sunlight into lush green and golden hues. You struggle onwards, slowly hack-ing with your knife through the heavy vines and creepers that block your progress. The ground underfoot squelches with mud that soon covers your boots. Mosquitoes and fantastically coloured dragonflies swarm all around in the murky, drenching heat. Snakes, basking in the midday warmth, hang in loose, lazy coils from the branches and hiss disinterestedly as you pass. A gentle breeze stirs the treetops and the sunbeams dropping through sudden chinks in the leaves are like a cascading shower of liquid gold. A parrot

shrieks and flutters through a shaft of sunlight, almost dazzling you with the sudden blaze of scintillating colour as it does so.

Eventually the going gets easier. After a while you decide to take a rest. As you crouch down to sip a little water from your hipflask, your gaze alights on an extraordinary tableau which is being enacted only a few paces away. A tiny red-faced spider monkey squats on a flat rock, staring with wide eyes at the swaying head of a large viper that is slowly weaving towards him. The monkey is frozen in terror, and is certain to die unless you choose to intervene. If you wish to save him by

killing the snake, turn to **11**. If you decide to ignore If you FLEE by running south past the Golem, turn the incident and continue on your way, turn to **18**.

to **72**. If you defeat it, turn to **14**.

2

4

You hastily delve into the pouch in search of any The Phoenix shrieks fiercely below as you race up magical compound that might prove useful. You the staircase. Passing the archway, you see a sort through the various pots and vials with little tunnel leading north beyond it. Damontir has left idea of their effects. Your selection of the three his footprints in the dust of the tunnel floor. You most promising substances is based largely on barely glance at the two statues at the mouth of the guesswork and whim, therefore. Will you try: tunnel, or the monstrous skeleton that lies before them, as you rush through the archway to head A blue paste? Turn to **261**

north. Turn to **208**.

A reddish-black powder? Turn to **90**

A green liquid? Turn to **121**

5

Your sixth sense leads you to suspect a trap of **3**

some kind. You edge carefully around the peri-meter of the clearing and set off through the dense You are at the north end of an unadorned gallery jungle once more. Turn to **80**.

strewn with blocks of broken stone. Ignoring another ebony door nearby, you begin to make your way south. Suddenly a deep groan breaks the **6**

silence and, peering through the gloom, you see Pulling the stopper from the bottle, you sniff what looks like a huge, roughly-hewn statue tentatively at the potion inside. It is odourless. You lumbering towards you. Even with your miracu-may drink this potion at any point during your lous sword you will have difficulty in damaging adventure (including now), except when you are the wrinkled slate that forms the Golem's body.

engaged in combat. When you do drink it, you GOLEM

should turn to 101 to discover what effect it has on VIGOUR 15

you - but remember to make a note of the para-Roll two dice:

graph number you are at before you do, because score 2 to 6 You are struck; lose 4 VIGOUR

101 will not redirect you to that entry! You replace score 7 to 12 The Golem loses 3 VIGOUR

the stopper and put the bottle in your backpack. In

the ITEMS box on your Character Sheet you should now write: 'Blue potion (see **101** for effect)'.

If you have not yet done so, you may now take the ring (turn to **45**) or the belt (turn to **174**). If you are ready to leave this room, turn to **240**.

7

The boulder bounces on the landing, arcs over you, lands a few steps further on and thunders off into the gloom. You get up and dust yourself off. A deafening crash echoes up the staircase as the boulder reaches the bottom. You descend the remaining steps - many of them now cracked or shattered - to the bottom. Turn to **211**.

8

The corridor soon turns to head east and eventually brings you to a black wooden door adorned with geometric gold-lacquered patterns. If you wish to open this door turn to **3**. If you would rather return to the last junction and take the corridor leading east from there, turn to **205**.

9

As you roll aside you can feel the heat of the energy blast passing close by you. Where you were lying a moment earlier, the floor has become a pool of molten stone. You spring to your feet, realizing that you cannot keep on evading its blasts forever.

However much the idea runs contrary to your

warrior instincts, you will have to try to get away.

into the jungle. If you do so, turn to **57**. If you Turn to **27**.

would rather shake the mischievous creature off your cloak and press on as you had intended, turn **10**

to **18**.

(illustration on previous page) The water tastes slightly bitter - but not intolerably so, and you experience no ill effects in drinking

12

12

from it. Marvelling at the extraordinary sorcery that has kept the water fresh for centuries, you The corridor widens and then comes to a dead end.

ponder your next move. Will you leave now and There are gilded double doors in the wall to your head west (turn to **119**), or will you go over and right. You cannot track the footprints any longer take the drum from the statue's lap (turn to **144**)?

because the area in front of the doors has been swept clean of dust - but deliberately, or as the **11**

result of a fight that took place here? Since the only way onwards seems to be through the double Without even rising from your crouch, you snap doors, you reach out to push them open. Just then, your arm straight. Your knife flashes as it spins you notice the empty black robe of a Nightmare once in the hot sunlight and buries itself in the Guard lying in the deep shadows at the corridor's viper's head. The little monkey watches you incre- end. If you wish to go over and investigate this, dulously as you stride over to the twitching body turn to **296**. If you would rather go through the of the snake and pull your knife free. His express-double doors, turn to **133**.

ion is so comical that you roar with laughter as you sheathe your knife. Strewn all around the monkey **13**

are the cracked shells of small nuts. Clearly he was enjoying his lunch so much that he failed to notice You twist away as the bolt hits, but you are not fast the viper's approach.

enough to evade it. Lose 15 VIGOUR for the As you turn to leave the clearing, he grabs two searing pain as it tears through your flesh and, if you are still alive, turn to **242**.

tiny fistfuls of nuts and scampers after you. You had intended to head directly towards the Temple **14**

of Katak, but suddenly you feel a tug at your cloak and look down to see that the little monkey has Resting after the titanic battle, you notice a nac- grabbed its hem between his teeth. He is very reous gleam from the broken rubble of the Golem's insistent that you should take a different route on body. You search amid the shattered planes of

slate and your fingers close on a rounded object in dust on the tunnel floor — and in the dust, foot-the ruins of the creature's breast. The object you prints. Damontir went this way, and you follow hold up to the light of your sword is a conch shell him. Turn to **208**.

trumpet with a lightning-bolt glyph engraved upon it. Note it on your Character Sheet if you **17**

decide to take it with you. Remembering that Damontir is still ahead of you, you hurry south.

You fall awkwardly on your backpack and try to Turn to **72**.

kick yourself through the dosing gap. At the first touch of pressure on your chest you cease your **15**

frantic struggles, freezing in a paralysis of horror as you watch the slab descend. You are powerless to You race along the passage and come to a halt move - you cannot even cry out. You do not hear before a heavy ebony door. There is no other way the dull crunch as floor and slab meet, for your for you to go. Glancing nervously into the dark-body has been gorily severed in two between ness behind you, you lift the latch and push the them. Your adventure ends here.

door open. Turn to **3**.

18

You have gone only a few metres further when you find yourself rapidly sinking. You have blundered into one of the tracts of quicksand which encircle the Temple's hidden location. It was in this way **16**

that the Ancient Priests of Katak protected their sacred shrine from desecration by the likes of you!

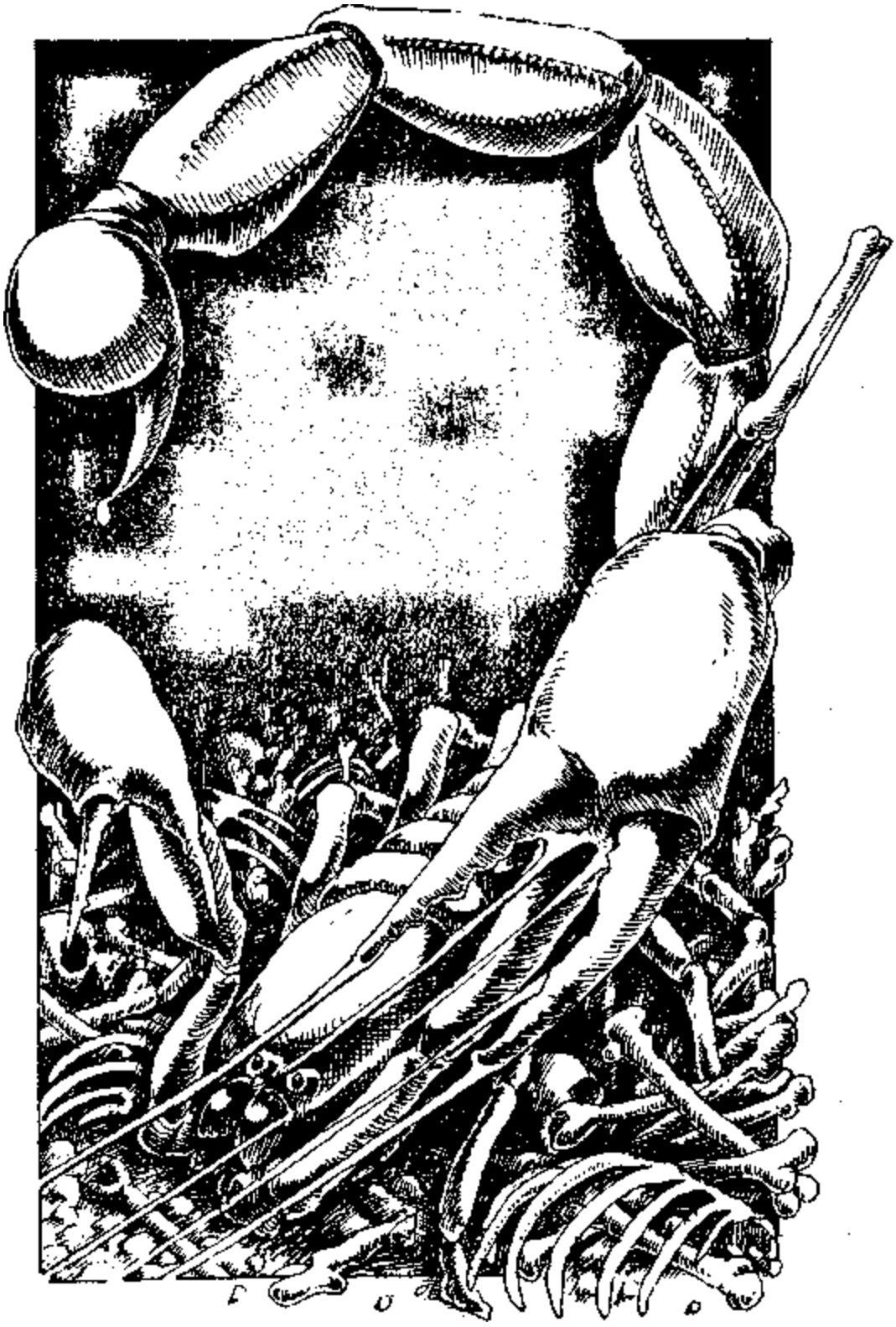
You pause by the archway. The statues are, you You thrash wildly, but to no avail. The fluid sands now see, of two warriors reaching for their swords.

roll over you, choking off your screams. Your life They face the archway with faces set in an express-and your quest end here.

ion of alarm. The skeletal carcass of a long-dead Gorgon lies just within the shadows of the arch.

Perhaps centuries have passed since it transmuted **19**

the warriors to stone with its gaze - only to die The Skullghasts gradually close in to attack. You itself, eventually. Your sword illuminates the dark cannot help shuddering as you feel their eyeless outlines of a tunnel beyond the archway. There is gaze upon you. Will you meet them with drawn



sword (turn to **126**), or will you take out one of the items you have collected (turn to **273**)?

20

What item will you take from your backpack: An ebony drum? Turn to **59**

A witchdoctor's wand? Turn to **255**

Powdered ruby? Turn to **127**

If you have none of these you will have to fight -

turn to **41**.

21

Did you succumb to the priest-kings' curse? If so, turn to **284**. If not, turn to **60**.

22

The corridor ends in a door with an iron ring in the shape of two entwined serpents for a handle. You turn this but at first the door will not open.

However, as you put your weight against it the door suddenly gives way. You stumble through, your feet slip from under you, and you careen down a smooth slope. You come to rest, shaken but unhurt, in a shallow pit filled with bare white bones. One other door leads from the room, opposite the one you entered by. As you pick your way across the floor of the pit towards this, snapping bones underfoot, something bulky and metallic reflects the glare of your sword. With slow, stalk-

ing movements of almost hypnotic menace, a giant Scorpion emerges from the pile of bones ahead of you. You cannot tell whether it is a living creature or a magically animated automaton, for the armoured segments of its body seem to be fashioned of solid gold. You start to edge around **24**

it, but you have underestimated its speed. Its opening attack comes with unbelievable swiftness.

Footprints in the dust show you that Damontir and Before you can draw back, you find one of its his Nightmare Guard came this way. Before long gleaming pincers closed around your leg and you the corridor turns sharply to the right. At the bend, are swinging your sword in a desperate struggle as a fine stiletto dagger lies gleaming on the floor. If it draws you inexorably closer to its glistening you wish to stop and pick this up, turn to **131.** If metal jaws.

you wish to keep walking along the tunnel, turn to **190**.

GOLD SCORPION

VIGOUR 12

Roll two dice:

25

score 2 to 4 You are stung; lose 4 VIGOUR

The effect of the magic Ring is to make you no score 5 to 6 You are struck by the other pincer; more substantial than a ghost. It gives you an lose 3 VIGOUR

uncanny feeling to see the boulder roll right score 7 to 12 The Scorpion loses 3 VIGOUR

through you. As it thunders off into the gloom It holds you fast and you cannot FLEE. Make a below, you become solid once again and the Ring note during this fight of the number of times you corrodes away and falls from your finger, its power are stung. If you win, turn to **178**.

now used up. You listen to the boulder rumble on and finally come to rest with a deafening crash, **23**

then you descend the remaining steps to the bottom. Turn to **211**.

As you approach the figurine, the ground gives way under your feet. Minki reacts at once and **26**

leaps from your shoulder to safety, but you are not so fortunate. You plummet down into the con-You can feel the awful venom coursing through cealed pit and die squirming on sharp mahogany your body. You crouch down amid the splintered stakes at the bottom.

bones. If you wish to take a snakebite antidote,

turn to **42**. If you don't have any such antidote, or *Roll two dice:*

do not wish to take it, turn to **239**.

score 2 to 7

You are hit; lose 3 VIGOUR

score 8 to 12 The Fire Elemental loses 3

27

VIGOUR

Where will you run: on, to the passage in the west If the fight is still going on after three more Combat wall (turn to **66**), or back the way you came (turn to Rounds, turn to **68**. If you win before then, turn to **169**)?

135. You are now to weak to FLEE.

28

30

You walk down the steps into the pool and Unable to use the Ring of Red Ruin at close immerse yourself completely in the cool water. If quarters, Damontir draws his own sword - a long, you had more time, it would be pleasant to linger wickedly sharp sliver of dark crystal set in a here a while and bathe properly, to wash from tarnished silver hilt.

your tired limbs all the dust and grime and blood of DAMONTIR THE MAD

the last few hours. But you cannot rid your VIGOUR 9

thoughts of the evil Damontir - he must not beat *Roll two dice:*

you to Katak's idol! As you emerge from the pool score 2 to 5 You are hit and lose 3 VIGOUR

dripping wet, you are surprised to notice that you score 6 to 12 Damontir loses 3 VIGOUR

are not shivering. When one has been swimming -

If you win, turn to **300**.

even in midsummer - one feels cold when first leaving the water, surely? But you have no time for **31**

idle reverie - will you leave now to head west (turn to **119**), or will you first take the drum from the After walking on for some minutes you arrive at a statue's lap (turn to **179**)?

point where the trail forks sharply to the right. You squint up through the rustling trees to where the **29**

sun hangs blazing in the cobalt sky. Unfurling your With the Elemental's flame growing stronger map, you estimate that the temple lies almost

second by second, the temperature in the room directly ahead of you. If you decide to head soars rapidly. The wearying heat begins to take its straight for your goal by chopping your way toll on you. Unless you can defeat the Elemental through the thick foliage, turn to **80**. If you decide quickly, you will succumb to heatstroke.

to remain on the twisting path, turn to **74**.

32

drifting in a void. There is no echo when you call out, only the deadening muted gulf of infinity.

Any magic that resides in the wand responds only And now, with terror, you begin to discern the to the witchdoctor's command. As you wave it outlines of the red glow: the eyes and gaping uselessly at them, two of the grisly creatures dart mouth of a gigantic face. It is the visage of Katak, closer to snap at you with their fiery jaws. Lose 4

looming towards you across the centuries. You VIGOUR. If you are still alive, you heft your sword have violated his temple and, falling towards his and prepare to fight. Turn to **126**.

volcanic maw, you will pay the ultimate price.

33

35

You fight back and manage to repulse the psychic You act quickly so that the natives have no chance attack. There is a fleeting impression of spiteful to stop you. Before they realize what is happening, thwarted evil, and then the curse you activated you lunge forward and grab the Witchdoctor by dissipates and fades away. Preferring not to expose the throat, choking off his monotonous chant. His yourself to the hazard of further such curses, you scrawny hand dips into the medicine pouch at his proceed to the end of the hall. Turn to **288**.

waist. Roll one die. A 5 or 6 means that you seize his arm before he can draw anything out of the **34**

pouch (turn to **280**), but on a 4 or less you react too slowly to stop him (turn to **83**).

The slabs descend to the floor, blocking the corridor behind and ahead of you. You begin to search **36**

the walls for a hidden route out of this trap.

Suddenly, the steady blue glare of your magic You heave the flagstone up to reveal narrow twist-sword flickers and dies. An instant of astonish-ing steps descending into the darkness below. You ment gives way to mounting panic as you realize draw your sword and the magic within it creates a that only a spell of superhuman power could rob harsh blue light that arcs along the blade. You can your sword of its enchantment. In the total dark-see now that the steps are carpeted with dust that ness, the hard stone floor seems to dissolve or has accumulated through millenia. Bas-reliefs vanish from under your feet. You reach out, but along the walls show an unconstrained relish in cannot find the walls - the corridor has dis-depicting the minutiae of flayings and blood sac-appeared! A red glow appears in the blackness far rifices. With Minki chattering nervously at your off, and as it approaches you know that you are heels, you walk down through air so dry and

stifling that it seems to begrudge you your every form of plumed serpents, their heads arched tautly breath. At the bottom of the steps, you pass up against the ceiling as if poised to strike. You through a narrow triangular archway into an step between these with some trepidation and antechamber with an exit in the north wall, directly inspect the cloak. In the mingled light of the opposite you, and faded tapestries covering the leaping flames and the steady blue glare of your entire length of the wall to your right. If you wish sword, the cloak is an item of breathtaking beauty.

to cross the room and leave to head north, turn to It shimmers with iridescent hues of turquoise, gold **96**. If you wish to look behind the tapestry first, and emerald green. You cannot imagine the bird turn to **221**.

from which these splendid feathers came. Will you **37**

take the cloak (turn to **193**), or will you leave it and continue on your way (turn to **294**)?

You lift the pendant up to the light and watch the large clear gem twisting on its silver chain, causing flashes of colour to dance and shimmer within.

40

Suddenly you feel a noxious influence taking effect The silent native warriors drive you on through the on you. Roll two dice and try to score equal or less jungle until you finally reach the clearing where than your current PSI. If you succeed, turn to **248**.

they have their village. More natives emerge from If you fail, turn to **191**.

their crude huts of dried mud and reeds to watch as you are taken to meet the Witchdoctor. This **38**

gnarled old man is inspecting several huge jars of The curse takes its immemorial effect on you, as fermenting liquor in the shade of his hut. He leaps dictated by incantations and rituals performed two up and scurries out as you approach. After bab-thousand years ago. You are not sure exactly what bling incomprehensibly to the natives who cap-has happened to you, only that an oppressive tured you, he starts to jab the air with a bone wand feeling of ill fortune now afflicts you. You proceed and chant ominously. Minki seems to have dis-to the far end of the hall in a brooding and appeared, for which you can hardly blame him.

demoralized mood. Turn to **288**.

You glare at the prancing Witchdoctor and then at the bristling spears of the warriors around you.

39

The native carrying your sword is standing only a few paces away. Beyond him, you notice a pole Flanking the western end of the chamber, where with a macabre collection of trophies dangling the cloak hangs, are two decorative pillars in the from it - shrunken heads. You count more than

twenty. If you intend to keep your own head from joining them, you had better do something. Will you go for the Witchdoctor (turn to **35**), or try to retrieve your sword from the warrior holding it (turn to **188**)?

41

You hurl yourself aside as the first of the Cadavers reaches you and swings its deadly obsidian-edged warclub. In your paralysis of horror, you have lost any opportunity you might have had to FLEE.

First CADAVER

VIGOUR 9

Second CADAVER

VIGOUR 9

Third CADAVER

VIGOUR 9

Fourth CADAVER

VIGOUR 9

Roll two dice:

score 2

You lose 12 VIGOUR

score 3

You lose 9 VIGOUR

score 4 to 5

You lose 6 VIGOUR

score 6 to 8

You lose 3 VIGOUR

score 9 to 12 One of the Cadavers (you decide which) loses 3 VIGOUR

If you defeat one of them, turn to **268**.

42

Unluckily, the snakebite antidote causes an adverse reaction as it mingles with the venom in your blood. Your end is quick, but by no means painless. You have failed.

43

the narrow spaces between the palms. When Your Simulacrum's sword clashes on yours with a spear-carrying natives enter the arbour and sur-shower of brilliant sparks. In its mad, murderous round you, you have no alternative but to surren-grin perhaps you glimpse the darkness of your der your sword and allow yourself to be herded own soul.

out. Turn to **40**.

Roll two dice:

45

score 2 to 6 You are hit and lose 3 VIGOUR

score 7 You hit one another and each lose You slip the bronze ring on to your finger. It is a 3 VIGOUR

magical Ring of Intangibility. You are certain it will score 8 to 12 The Simulacrum loses 3 VIGOUR

be of use at some point in your adventure. If you have not done so, you may now take the belt (turn If you win, turn to **283**.

to **174**) or the bottle of blue liquid (turn to **6**). If you wish to continue on your way, turn to **240**.

44

46

The track winds on for some distance and then straightens out where it passes between two rows The boulder rolls over you and you are crushed to of sapling palms which bend together overhead to a bloody pulp by its massive weight. Perhaps, if form a natural arbour. The air seems less humid Damontir survives to return this way, he will come here, the scent of the flowers less cloying. As you upon your mangled corpse and laugh in evil glee.

walk along the arbour with the dancing patterns of You have failed.

sunlight and leaf-shade playing across your skin, you start to whistle a tune. Were it not for the heat **47**

and the strange jungle sounds, you could almost The Phoenix feather glows brightly as you enter imagine that you were strolling through the Orna-the column of light and suffuses you with a mystic mental Gardens in Achtan. The tune dies on your aura. Unseen forces act to render you almost lips as you espy a dozen fierce, scarified faces weightless. Instead of plummeting down, you drift peering at you through the slats of entwined gradually lower in the light beam. Eventually you foliage. The 'natural arbour' is a native trap - and descend right through the replica pyramid and you have walked straight into it! You race for the come out into a cavern beneath it. The gravity-far end, but barricades are swiftly lowered into defying force settles you gently on the floor and place. You are caged. Blowpipes protrude through you step from the beam. Turn to **224**.

how many of the Nightmare Guard were with him, for where these ghoulish assassins pass they leave no trace. You decide to follow the footprints west.

Turn to **12**.

51

You advance warily along the path. Minki is no **48**

longer running playfully ahead, preferring to keep close to you now. Unease gnaws at you as you As you rush in towards it, the creature fixes its eye listen to the myriad forest noises, straining to filter upon you and stuns you with a low-power concus-from the ceaseless chatter and shrieks of bird and sive blast. Lose 2 points of VIGOUR. If you are still beast the faint sound that might betray a predator's alive, you come to only moments later to find the approach. The path veers sharply to the left and creature staring down at you. Its eye is an you emerge into a clearing where a large wooden incandescent violet. It unleashes a bolt of searing cage hangs from the branch of a tree. There is a red light. Throw two dice *and add 2 to the number* young native girl within. Her wrists are bound *rolled* (because dodging is more difficult when you with silver wire to a bar of the cage. She stares are lying on your back). If the total is greater than silently down at you, and you notice her matted your current AGILITY score, turn to **287**. If it is less hair and wild appearance. Will you cross the than or equal to your AGILITY, turn to **9**.

clearing and continue on your way (turn to **129**), or will you try to free her (turn to **271**)?

49

(illustration on following page) Will you bathe in the pool (turn to **28**), or drink **52**

from it (turn to **10**)?

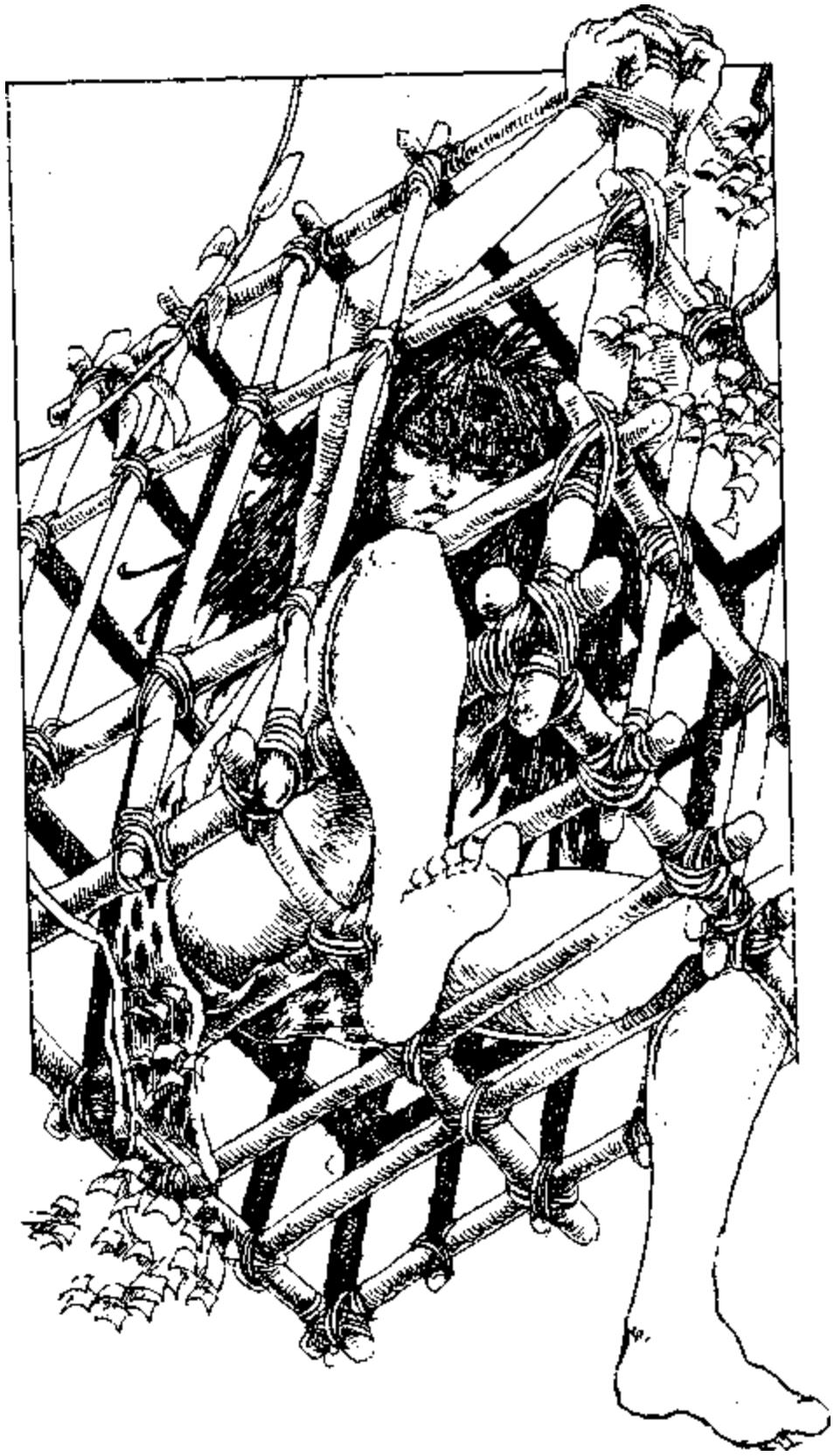
A rough stale odour rises from the urn as you open **50**

it. It is filled almost to the brim with black cinders.

Your first guess, that they may be the burnt You pass a door in the left-hand wall but decide to remains of sacrificial victims, is quickly revised.

ignore it. The corridor you are in is soon joined by The cinders are too dark and too heavy for that -

another from the south. In the dust you can see more like volcanic ash. It is a vivid testimony of the three sets of footprints - obviously belonging to unreasoning fanaticism of the Katak priesthood Damontir and his two torchbearers. You cannot tell that they would collect and store such deposits in



this quantity. Take one of the urns with you if you wish, then make your way back to the hall by turning to **288**.

53

You pass through a succession of high peaked chambers. To your right you see a cloistered gallery which runs the length of the wall and appears to link each chamber to the next. It is pointless to speculate on the reasoning behind Anku architecture, as it was guided more often by ritual and doctrine than by functional necessity.

Nonetheless, as you walk on through the row of chambers you begin to think it might be worth going over to take a look at the gallery. If you wish to do so, turn to **236**. If you wish to continue west, turn to **217**.

54

The bodies of the Cadavers lie around you in a debris of splintered weapons and riven armour.

Your skin crawls at the sight of the pale, bloodless cuts your sword made in their grey flesh, but you force yourself to search them thoroughly. It is with some bitterness that you realize how needlessly you prolonged the risky battle - you might as well have fled, for the Cadavers carry nothing of value.

Leaving through the opening in the south wall, you stride along a short passage and come to a halt before a door of black wood. With no other route available, you lift the latch and push the door open. Turn to **3**.

55

room, with its mane of smoke curling along the sloping roof and its eyes like embers against the The passage brings you on to a low balcony over- soot-smeared stone. In one hand it holds a whip of looking a large circular chamber. The floor below is sparks and in the other a scimitar-shaped jet of red covered by a slowly dancing interplay of orange flame.

lights. As you watch, you see glowing patterns It is the Malgash, the mightiest of all the demons gradually unfold, blend and give way to new of fire and evil. It steps forth in a rush of darkness patterns in an unending display. You realize it and your swords clash - cold white light on hot red must be caused by a patina of phosphor on the flame.

floor. Two curved staircases sweep down from either end of the balcony into the room. An arch-THE MALGASH

VIGOUR 18

way leads off to the north about halfway down the *Roll two dice:*

right-hand staircase, and on the steps before this score 2 to 7 You lose 4 VIGOUR

archway stand two worn statues. If you wish to score 8 to 12 The Malgash loses 3 VIGOUR *and* descend the staircase to your left, turn to **111.** If you lose 1 VIGOUR

you would rather take the one to your right, turn to **16.**

Note that you lose a point of VIGOUR every time you hit the Malgash, because of the flames that **56**

cover its body. If you attempt to FLEE by running for the door in the north wall, roll as usual for its You step through the doorway into a spacious hall parting strike at you and then turn to **77**. If you with a high vaulted ceiling. Towering, fire-fight and overcome it, turn to **256**.

blackened murals dominate the west and east walls. There is an open pit on the middle of the **57**

floor and a door at the far end. You are striding briskly along the hall, being careful to give the pit a Something is clearly amiss for the monkey to wide berth, when a noise wells up from deep in the become so excited. You heft the rock he was sitting earth that stops you dead. It begins as a faint howl on and hurl it through the undergrowth in the of rushing wind, quickly building to a feral roar. A direction you had originally intended to go. It torrent of mingled fire and darkness erupts from lands with a dull plop and soon sinks from view. If the black maw of the pit. You step back aghast as you had not heeded the monkey's warning you you behold a gaunt figure of living shadow taking would have blundered straight into a patch of shape from the flames. It stands as high as the deadly quicksand!

As you continue on your way, he runs alongside *Roll two dice:*

you and shows you the path of firm ground that score 2 to 3 You are grievously wounded; lose takes you safely past the treacherous quicksand.

6 VIGOUR

With your new companion, whom you decide to score 4 to 6 You are sorely wounded; lose 4

call Minki, you head onwards through the jungle.

VIGOUR

After a little while you come to a trail of sorts, score 7 to 9 You are wounded and lose 2

presumably beaten through the thick tropical VIGOUR

undergrowth by the savage natives of the region.

score 10 to 12 One of the Skullghasts shatters Although you hope to avoid any encounter with them, your hand never strays far from your sword-You do not need to keep score of the Skullghasts'

hilt.

VIGOUR as a single blow with the mace will smash The trail soon brings you to a lichen-stained one. If and when you have destroyed six of the boulder sculpted to resemble a squatting figure creatures, turn to **206**.

with features that are both fierce and less-than-human. This weathered statue is clearly not the work of the natives. It has stood here for thousands of years and is a relic of the Ancient Empire of the Katak theocracy. Your knowledge of archaeology is limited, but if you read certain glyphs and baroque flourishes correctly then this statue marks the grave of an Anku nobleman.

Possibly the treasure that would have been interred with him still remains undisturbed to this day.

59

Will you try to push the statue aside and open the The Cadavers are almost upon you as you pull the grave (turn to **140**), or will you press on towards drum from your backpack. The engravings on it the lost temple (turn to **31**)?

depict warriors of the Anku Empire. In desperation, you begin to pound a beat on the drum with **58**

the flat of your hand. At once the Cadavers stop advancing and begin a slow, macabre wardance The sceptre is heavy and ill-balanced. You wield it around you. As you move over to the south wall like a mace as the Skullghasts glide closer to sear and along the passage, they follow you. You dare you with their enveloping flame.

not stop the drumbeat that keeps them locked in

through the boulder into the corridor beyond. As their silent dance, so you head on with your you re-solidify, the Ring crumbles in fragments uncanny retinue until you arrive at a large black from your finger. You hold up your sword and door. There is no other way onwards. Still pound-examine your surroundings. The corridor leads ing the drum, you manage to lift the latch with straight on ahead of you. In the dust you can see your elbow and kick the door open. Turn to **218**.

three sets of footprints - obviously those of Damontir and the two torchbearers, for where the **60**

Nightmare Guard pass they leave no trace. You Blue smoke curls up from the body at your feet.

walk along the corridor which soon turns to head You realize the Phoenix's corpse is smouldering, west. A little further along you come to a door in about to catch light. If you have an urn full of the wall to your left. If you wish to open the door, cinders, you can use them to smother the corpse turn

to **167**. If you would rather carry straight on, and prevent it from igniting. If you wish to do this, turn to **269**.

turn to **161**. If you do not have an urn of cinders, or do not wish to use it in this way, turn to **73**.

65

There is a faint howl like wind across the moors as **61**

one of the Nightmare Guards turns to dust within One of the natives had a small clay bottle tied on a its dark robe. The other only lunges forward again, thong around his wrist. It contains a pungent and the corridor echoes as your blades clash.

brown fluid which you recognize as snakebite *Roll two dice:*

antidote. You put it in your backpack and set off in score 2 to 5 You are hit and lose 3 VIGOUR, search of the temple. Turn to **80**.

score 6 to 12 The Nightmare Guard loses 3

VIGOUR

62

If you win, you head north through the double The gem is as smooth and as large as an egg, and doors. Turn to **108**.

gleams in your hand like a drop of blood. You do not have time to value it now, but it is of a very **66**

satisfying weight. You slip it into your backpack You race frantically along the passage. There is no and head for the passage in the western wall. You door or alcove where you might take cover, and are barely halfway across the room when brilliant the end of the passage is nowhere in sight. As you light flares up in each of the niches. Minki cowers

run, the creature takes careful aim at your back.

70

You keep waiting for the bolt that will shrivel the You break from cover and leap towards the startled flesh from your bones and scatter your blood in sentries. They stare aghast at you, a resplendent sizzling droplets. Searing energy lances through and terrifying figure in your gleaming regalia of the air to strike your fleeing form. You are dead in battle. Turn to **241** for the fight, but you may add 2

less than a second.

to your dice roll in the first Combat Round only, to represent your advantage of surprise.

67

You deposit the item you have chosen to leave in **71**

the statue's cupped hands and pick up the ebony The Serpent shudders and spreads its plumage in a drum. Remember to erase the item you have left terrible hollow shriek. Sparkling crimson dust from your Character Sheet. Examining the drum, , gushes forth from the many deep gashes your you see that it is encircled by angular carvings sword has cleaved in its stone body. The floor which portray warriors of the Anku Empire, their shakes as the Serpent crashes down at your feet.

bodies twisted in a lusty, barbaric wardance. You Curious, you scoop up a handful of the dust these put the drum into your backpack and return to the strange creatures bled. It is powdered ruby, vestibule to head west. Turn to **119**.

perhaps imbued with magical properties. If you wish to fold some in a cloth and take it with you, **68**

you may do so. (Remember to note it on your Your senses reel and you slump to the floor.

Character Sheet if you do). Turn to **294**.

Mercifully, you black out. You do not feel the **72**

Elemental's red-hot gauntlets close upon you, or the bone-shattering impact with which it hurls you A passage off the far end of the gallery slopes against the wall. Your life and your adventure end gently upwards and eventually brings you to a here.

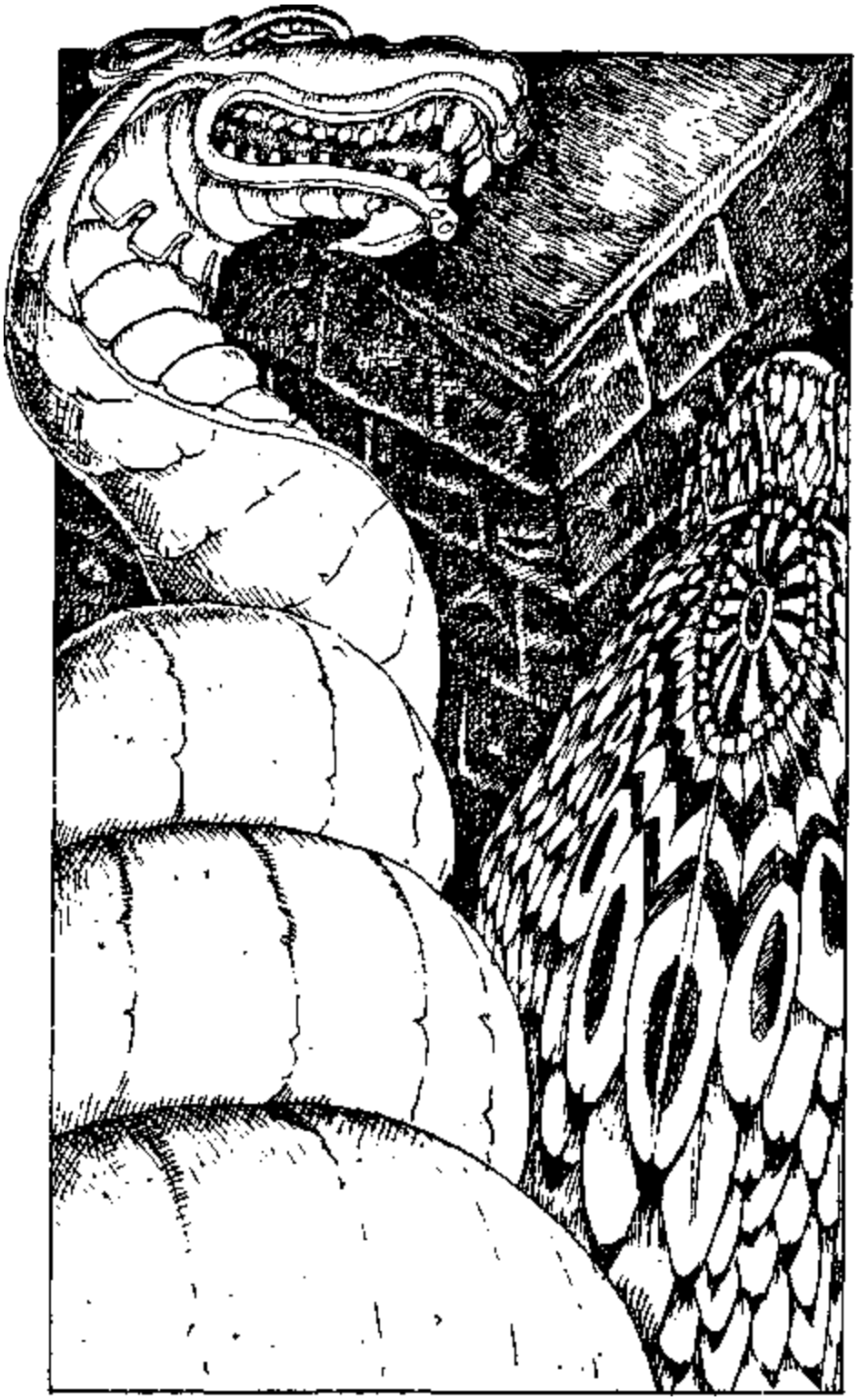
small vestibule with triangular archways in the west and east walls. To the west you can see steps **69**

down, and decide to go that way. Turn to **207**.

You have not gone much further when the corridor **73**

you are in joins a second corridor running north and south. You decide to head straight on. Turn to Your forehead beads with sweat in a sudden wave **190**.

of heat. As you retreat from it, the corpse bursts



into flame and is rapidly consumed. In moments, only glowing ashes remain. As you watch, the ashes begin to shift and stir, glowing ever more brightly until you finally have to avert your eyes from the blinding glare. As

the light dims, you turn back and for a moment stand transfixed. The Phoenix has arisen, reborn from its ashes, all its wounds now healed. It towers over you, and its eyes are incandescent with proud fury. You realize that you must FLEE - either up the other staircase (turn to **4**) or east, along the tunnel under the balcony (turn to **220**).

74

A few hundred metres further on, the trail branches in two. If you wish to go right, turn to **95.** If you wish to go left, turn to **253**.

75

You have made a fatal mistake in turning your back on a master of the assassin's art. The silken garrotte slips down around your neck and, with a single deft twist, the Nightmare Guard extinguishes your life.

76

You place your sword on the floor beside you and seize the bars of the grille with both hands. Minki watches intrigued as you brace yourself to push at the grille with all your strength, pitting your flesh

and bone against the corroded bronze and crumb-the golden idol you have crossed half a world to ling mortar. Suddenly the grille gives way, falling find. In your imagination you see Damontir standin on the dusty floor with a metallic clang. The ing before it, his eyes lit with crazed greed as his noise echoes eerily along the hushed corridors.

fingers caress the sculpted metal. You groan in Passing along a short entrance tunnel, you find despair and the anguish of defeat, then slump to yourself in a narrow pillared chamber. There is the jetty. With head bowed you watch the slow another tunnel leading from the north wall directly ripples drifting across the copper lake. You are so opposite you. In the hot smoky light of two bra-near to your goal and yet so far, and the taste of ziers (have they burned here since ancient times?

failure is bitter indeed.

were the spells of the Anku priesthood so powerful?) you see a magnificent cloak of richly coloured **79**

feathers hanging at the far end of the room. Will The priestlords of the Anku Empire would hardly you:

have left such a formidable monster in this room Take a closer look at the cloak? Turn to **39**

unless it was guarding something of great value or Return to the passage and go

power. Sure enough, your search of the altar stone on? Turn to **213**

quickly uncovers a concealed recess in which lies Cross over to the tunnel in the

an ornate golden chalice. You hold it up in the blue north wall? Turn to **97**

light cast by your sword and admire the intricate workmanship. If you wish to pour some water into **77**

the chalice and drink from it, turn to **109**. If not, You are almost at the door when the demon's you put it in your backpack for now and head west terrible whip lashes out towards you. Roll one die.

out of the room (turn to **87**).

If you score 1 to 4, the whip curls around you -

turn to **107**. If you score a 5 or 6, the whip cracks on **80**

empty air - turn to **235**.

Between the trees you discern the faintest signs of a straight path leading ahead. As you step forward **78**

you find you are treading upon ancient flagstones, You look through the contents of your backpack green and springy with moss. This is not merely but cannot think of any item that might help. Once another of the crude native tracks. With Minki more you turn your gaze to the silver pyramid.

beside you, you walk steadfastly for about an hour, Somewhere within or below it, you feel sure, lies making good headway thanks to the centuries-old

path you have found. It is now mid-afternoon.

Your sunbronzed face is bathed in sweat. A thick curtain of lush fronds bars your way, and you push them aside to reveal a breathtaking sight. In a vast clearing entirely free of vegetation, tier upon tier of grey basalt rise up before you. It is the magnificent pyramidal Temple of Katak, lost to civilization for twenty centuries! Hundreds of withered creepers choke the crumbling blocks and the broad flight of steps that ascends the pyramid's eastern face. In the shattered edifice at the summit you will find the entrance to the catacombs within.

You move quickly across the wide clearing to the pyramid's base. You are just about to start up the dusty stairway when you are brought up short by the sound of voices. To your amazement you see two men-at-arms strolling into view around one corner of the pyramid. They are about sixty metres away. Will you hail them (turn to **125**), or duck out of sight before they notice you (turn to **164**)?

81

You are lucky. Although you cannot see where you are going, you blunder straight into the pool. The cool water extinguishes the flames. Roll two dice -

the score is the number of VIGOUR points you lose owing to burns. If you are still alive, you rise up laughing with relief and wade to the edge of the pool. You are disinclined to approach the statue again, so you leave and head west along the corridor. Turn to **119**.

Roll two dice:

score 2 to 5 You are hit and lose 4 VIGOUR

score 6 to 12 The Witchdoctor loses 3 VIGOUR

If you FLEE from the combat, turn to **189**. If you win, turn to **201**.

84

82

Your skin crawls at the fell Revenant's touch, but you stare defiantly into its mould-clumped face You pull off your worn leather boots and eagerly and finally shrug off the virulent spell it is trying to buckle on the gold sandals. They are in fact the cast upon you. Before it can prepare itself for a fabled Sandals of Talmiri, the Gladiator of the second attempt, you close your fingers on its Gods, a hero in ancient times. They have the effect ribcage and swing around to dash its brittle body of increasing your *current* and *normal* AGILITY

against a hard stone pillar. It flies in fragments score to 10. Note down this change on your Char-across the floor. You search for each bony shard acter Sheet: your *normal* AGILITY is now 10. Elated and grind them all underfoot before picking up by your chance discovery of such a potent magical Minki and continuing west. Turn to **217**.

prize, you walk back to the vestibule and head west along the corridor. Turn to **119**.

85

Roll three dice (or roll one die three times and add **83**

the scores together). If the total is less than or equal He hurls a black powder to the ground at his feet.

to your current PSI, turn to **186**. If the total exceeds You shield your eyes from a sudden glare of light your PSI, turn to **247**.

and look up to find that he has transformed himself into a gruesome demon with rough horny **86**

skin and whirring wings of razor-sharp flint. You snatch your sword from your dumbfounded captor Approaching the desecrated mummies, you see and raise it just in time to parry the first attack by that the gold covering has been torn away from their faces. A few wisps of hair still cling to skin this hideous adversary.

like cracked leather. Their eyes are narrow slits, TRANSFORMED WITCHDOCTOR VIGOUR 12

but the black jaws of each gape in a sepulchral

rictus. You stop before one of the mummies and **89**

gaze into its ancient face, experiencing a thrill of The corridor is soon joined by another from the blended fear and fascination. Will you: south. Playing the blue light of your sword over Examine the mummies more

the floor, you can make out three sets of footprints closely? Turn to **104**

in the dust. They lead from the southern corridor Continue along to the end of

and head west. You decide to follow them. Turn to the hall? Turn to **288**

12.

Tear the gold covering from the

face of one of the other

90

mummies? Turn to **232**

The powder is folded inside several large flat leaves. You tip it out on to your hand and examine **87**

it uncertainly. Having seen warlocks and magi-You walk along a featureless corridor for some time cians use magical dusts of transformation, you without finding a door or side tunnel. At last you decide that that is what it must be. You concentrate come to the end of the corridor. Just as you are on an image of yourself turning into an eagle and about to enter the room beyond, however, you flying across the lake, then hurl the powder to the notice a slight acrid smell in the air. When you ground at your feet -

glance back to see if Minki is still safely with you, It is the last thing you ever know. Instead of you are surprised to see his fur bristling. As you rising in a magic cloud to transmute your body, the approach the entrance of the room, the hairs on dust explodes on contact with the ground. The your own body start to prickle and stand on end. If horrendous detonation rips you limb from limb you wish to carry on into the room, turn to **92**. If and scatters you in a gory smear across the walls you would prefer to turn back, turn to **250**.

and the lake's surface. You should never have tried experimenting with the contents of a witchdoctor's medicine pouch!

88

Just as you are reaching for the skull, it suddenly **91**

ignites and floats up into the air - a grisly appari-tion wreathed in pale gold fire. If you are wearing a You soon arrive at the end of the tunnel. There is jewelled pectoral, turn to **234**. If you do not have nothing but a blank stone wall in front of you. You this item, turn to **118**.

are about to retrace your steps to explore a diffe-

rent route when, acting on a hunch, you tap the wall with your sword-hilt and discover that it is hollow. It is, in fact, a secret door, and you soon discover that by applying pressure at one edge you can cause it to pivot around a central hinge.

Beyond, you see a small room in which a dusty skeleton sprawls beside a pile of sparkling gems. If you wish to enter this room, turn to **153**. If you would rather return to the Phoenix's lair and make your way up to the other staircase, turn to **16**.

92

As you cross the threshold into the room, there comes a harsh sound like a ship's mast snapping and a bolt of magical lightning crackles from the walls to engulf you. For a moment your muscles lock rigid and you are held in a paroxysm of pain.

As the coruscating light around you fades, you are released from your paralysis to fall forward into the room. Lose 5 VIGOUR. If you are still alive, you lie in the dust for a few moments while the memory of your torture fades. Your mouth is dry and you feel quite weak. Minki is beside you, pawing at your arm. In spite of the pain, you are glad that he was behind you - if the bolt had discharged through his small frame then it would surely have killed him.

You manage to stand up on quivering legs (reduce your AGILITY by 1 point) and look around you.

You are in a wide, shadowy hall which may once have served as a convocation chamber for the worshippers of Katak. The floor is shrouded under

centuries of dust. As you move further into the **95**

room, the light of your sword falls upon two bronze-bound doors to the west. There seems to be As you stride on through the jungle, you do not no other way on from the hall, so you cross to see the snare that is set across your path. Suddenly these doors. Will you open the one to your left it goes taut around your ankle as the tree to which (turn to **150**) or the one to your right (turn to **134**)?

it is attached whips upright. You are jerked clear of the ground and dangle helplessly. There is a dull **93**

twang as the second part of this native trap is sprung - a heavy barbed spear hurtles through the A number of passages and side chambers lead off air

towards you. To avoid it you must roll equal to the hall, but you decide it would be fruitless to or less than your current AGILITY score on two explore all of these. Continuing on, you leave dice. If you succeed, turn to **137**. If the combined through the high archway at the western end of roll of the two dice exceeds your AGILITY, turn to the hall and walk along the corridor beyond until it **196**.

turns to head south. Directly ahead of you is an opening in the wall, and through it you can see **96**

steps leading down. You may go down the steps (turn to **263**) or stay in the corridor and head south You enter a large room from which a single pas-

(turn to **194**).

sage leads west. As you make your way across to this, you notice a massive granite block against the **94**

opposite wall. It may once have been an altar to Katak, where the ferocious god's priests would Spurred by your fear, you execute a leap of extraor-have butchered heretics and war captives. You are dinary agility and land on a nearby outcropping.

just about to head over to the altar to search it for White flame streams from the Dragon's snout to hidden treasure when a bizarre creature lopes out lick around the rock you have just vacated. You see of the shadows to confront you. It is bipedal, with it throw up a cloud of sizzling water droplets from dark spiky skin and vestigial forelimbs, but its the lake surface. The Dragon may breathe again at most unusual feature is its 'head', for this is any moment, and you have little time to deliberate actually no more than a huge glowing eye on the on your next move. With your way to the arch end of a long stalk. As you hesitate, transfixed by barred, will you take on the fearsome beast with its odd appearance, the creature discharges a sear-your sword (turn to **182**) or will you use an item ing beam of ruby light from its eye. You start to you have found (turn to **148**)?

move, but you are too slow. The energy blast rips

into and through you, vaporizing your blood and If you decide to FLEE, turn to **15** (remember that sinew and fusing your bones to a tarry mess. You both the Cadavers will get a last strike at you). If are dead before you have time to scream.

you choose to fight on and manage to overcome another, turn to **238**.

97

99

It is a short tunnel just like the one in the opposite It is getting difficult to breathe. Your muscles feel wall of the chamber, ending in another bronze like water and you pitch forward into the heaped grille. Peering through the bars you see a passage bones. You have not even enough strength to cry stretching into the darkness to your left and right.

out. Your own bones will soon join those on which You could get through into the passage by forcing you lie. Even in death, the Scorpion has claimed the grille. As before, it will cost you 1 point of you as its final victim.

VIGOUR. If you wish to force the grille open, subtract 1 from your *current* VIGOUR score and **100**

turn to **266**. If you decide against that, you may now inspect the cloak of feathers (turn to **39**) or The spiral staircase takes you down a long way.

return to the other passage and head on (turn to You realize as you reach the bottom at last that you **213**).

are now deep underground, far below the pyramid itself. You think back upon the last few hours - you **98**

have escaped bizarre perils, conquered monsters more grotesque than any you have faced before.

With each moment the undead warriors become And, in Minki, you have won and lost a valued stronger and faster, while your own fatigue begins companion. Damontir's wrongs must not continue to tell. You fight on with instinctive skill as you unpunished. Strangely, there is no dust here to weigh up the arguments favouring a strategic show you his footprints - you have no evidence withdrawal.

that he survived to get this far, but somehow you know he is ahead of you. His spells and devious *Roll two dice:*

cunning will have brought him safely through the score 2 to 3

You lose 6 VIGOUR

temple, but they will not save him from you.

score 4 to 6

You lose 3 VIGOUR

Directly ahead, in the north wall of the chamber in score 7 to 12 One of the Cadavers loses 3

which you stand, a marble portico encloses an VIGOUR

archway from which light streams. You cross the

floor and pass through into the room beyond. Turn to **130**.

101

The potion feels cold as it trickles down your throat. Within moments, a surge of energy courses through your whole body. If you are wounded, the potion restores 20 points of VIGOUR. However, this will *not* increase your VIGOUR above its *normal* score - any excess points are simply wasted.

You throw the empty bottle aside. Return to the last entry you were reading.

102

There is a sound from inside the ruined structure atop the pyramid. Wasting no time, you vault over a fallen column and land with catlike grace within the broken ruins. A glance takes in the details - a bored sentry leaning against the wall, a spear in the crook of his arm, his hands folded across his pot belly - his companion, slumped in the shade under the portico, snoring beneath a wide-brimmed hat while flies tread in the dampness of his pasty face. You do not even trouble to unsheathe your sword. Two strides bring you face to face with the first man. He stares at you in slack-jawed astonishment and then doubles up as your fist slams into his sternum. A second blow completes the job. His limp body falls to the masonry-strewn floor like a broken doll.

You catch his spear and turn to face the other **104**

man. Rhythmic snores still emanate from under Despite some misgivings, you peel more of the the brim of his hat. You heft the spear and advance gold leaf from the nearest mummy in order to on him. You would like to spit him like a pig where examine it more carefully. You lay bare a shrivelled he lies, but that is not the way of the Knights of body graced with many fine jewels and artifacts. If Palados. You are about to yell at him to wake up Damontir exposed the faces of several mummies, when Minki darts forward and prods him in the you wonder, why did he not also loot their bodies eye. Spluttering, the man is roused from his slum-of this treasure? You have your answer, perhaps, ber. As soon as he sees you he draws his sword as a sense of fearful doom suddenly assails you.

and jumps up to fight.

The priest-kings wove a sorcerous defence about themselves, and their curse is reaching down to SENTRY

VIGOUR 9

you through the centuries. Fortunately the curse *Roll two dice:*

has been weakened by the passage of time, and score 2 to 3 You are hit and lose 3 VIGOUR

you need only roll your current PSI or less on *one* score 4 to 12 The Sentry loses 3 VIGOUR

die to resist it. If you succeed, turn to **33**. If you fail, turn to **38**.

If you win, turn to **216**.

105

103

You take a brand from the open fire where the You set your backpack down on the floor and leave village women are cooking and use it to torch the Minki squatting on top of it as you jump across on huts. The dry reeds burn furiously in the scorching to the plinth. To your relief, it does not shift or afternoon heat. You wrest the Witchdoctor's bone drop away under your weight. Nor does there wand from him so that he cannot send any magic seem to be any kind of trap on the casket, as far as after you, and then release him. As he stamps and you can tell. However, the moment you open the shrieks, the natives abandon any attempt to tend rusted clasp and lift the lid, a thick cloud of the blaze and take up their spears and blowpipes.

jet-black vapour billows out around you. If you It seems they are determined to have their revenge wish to jump back out of the vapour, turn to **114**. If on you, even if that means letting the village burn you would prefer to hold your breath and find out down. A poisoned dart whistles past your ear!

what is inside the casket, turn to **229**.

Turn to **189**.

106

The dust around you lies smooth and undisturbed, broken only by your own footprints and Minki's pawmarks. The Spectral Warriors have gone as though they never existed - but the wounds they dealt you prove they were no mere phantasms of your mind. Chilled by the memory of the ghostly battle, you continue west. Turn to **293**.

107

The whip scorches the leather of your armour and burns into your flesh like white-hot drops of lead.

You scream in pain as you are dragged back towards the fire demon. Lose 5 VIGOUR and, if you are still alive, turn to **282**.

108

Shortly you arrive at a narrow flight of steps which you follow downwards. Turn to **207**.

109

If you are wounded, turn to **225**. If your VIGOUR

score is currently undepleted, on the other hand, then turn to **177**.

110

Your last blow smashes the loathsome Revenant asunder. You crush the bony fragments underfoot.

At last, when all that remains is a debris of powder

and fine shards, your battle-rage subsides. Turn to midst of them looms the cruel visage of Damontir **93**.

the Mad. Thus, at the end, your thoughts are of the man for whom you have borne such hatred Ill

111

through the years. You will never exact retribution You reach the bottom of the staircase and see that a now, never avenge poor Minki's death. Damontir's tunnel leads east in the wall below the balcony. As triumphant laughter torments your final moments you step further into the room, a terrifying shrill as you boil to death in the depths of the lake.

cry shatters the silence and a majestic Phoenix spreads its wings before you. It seems to have **113**

appeared out of nowhere - from above, its brick-The remaining sentry watches in terror as you cut red plumage blended with the flickering phos- down his comrade. Throwing down his sword, he phorescence. The feathers on the underside of its sprints for the edge of the clearing. Minki chases wings and across its breast are bright gold and its him a little of the way, screeching abusively and curved beak shines like metal. You recover from hurling nutshells, then gives up and scampers your astonishment barely in time to dodge its first back to your side. You watch as the fleeing sentry attack and draw your sword.

wades into the jungle and is lost to view. He clearly PHOENIX

VIGOUR 12

prefers to take his chances with the natives and wild beasts than face you in single combat. Wise *Roll two dice:*

choice. You slip your blade back into its scabbard score 2 to 6 You are hit; lose 3 VIGOUR

and bend to examine the other man's corpse. You score 7 to 12 The Phoenix loses 3 VIGOUR

find 8 Gold Pieces and a hipflask of gin. Take what If you FLEE up the other staircase, turn to **4**. If you you will and then head up the pyramid steps by win, turn to **21**.

turning to **200**.

(illustration on previous page) **114**

112

You jump back instinctively as the vapour engulfs You hit the lake on your back and, stunned by the you. Your only thought is to keep it from getting in impact, sink like a stone in the boiling waters. Your your lungs, and you forget all about the pit until flesh is scalded raw within seconds, but you seem you find yourself toppling backwards off the almost detached from the convulsing pain. Images plinth. You try to twist in mid-air, but dash your of a slow billowing inferno engulf you, and in the head against the side of the pit and plunge heavily

to the bottom. When you come to, you are in **117**

darkness - your glowing sword still lies on the As you begin the opening feints and thrusts in this plinth above. In its faint blue light you see Minki uneven battle, you catch sight of someone moving peering down anxiously. Your first attempt at between the trees. It is the girl you freed. The moving sends a wave of sickening pain up your natives see her also, and for some reason this leg. You have twisted it badly and must reduce makes them blanch. The girl pads forward through your *current* AGILITY score by 2 points. This comes the leaves, gathering speed. She drops to a crouch, at a particularly inopportune time as you will need then to all fours. As she races towards you, her to be agile if you are to scale the rough, chiselled glistening olive skin seems to take up the pattern of walls of the pit. You get painfully to your feet and the dappled sunlight that falls upon it. There is a begin the long climb up. Roll two dice. If the total is deep growl that could not come from a human less than or equal to your current AGILITY score, throat. Suddenly a lithe tawny jaguar crashes turn to **197**. If the total of the two dice exceeds your through the undergrowth on to the path, sending AGILITY, turn to **138**.

the natives fleeing in abject terror. The jaguar looks at you and Minki and then slowly prowls off into **115**

the jungle. The girl you freed was a Werecat, a You crash forward and break your neck on the lycanthrope whom the natives had bound with hard stone

steps. Your death is instantaneous, and silver and caged for their own safety. She has a better fate by far then that you would have repaid your kindness in freeing her by possibly received at the hands of the accursed Smoke saving your life.

Wraiths.

You are about to proceed when you notice a small clay bottle lying on the trampled grass. One **116**

of the natives dropped it when he ran. It contains a pungent brown fluid which you identify as snake-A short stretch of corridor opens into a tall conical bite antidote. You put it in your backpack (write it room faced with grey-white marble. A multitude of on your Character Sheet) and set off in search of deep recesses indent the walls, and in each stands the temple. Turn to **80**.

a stoppered bronze urn stained with an azure bloom of corrosion. There is no other way on from **118**

this room, so you may either return to the Hall of the priest-kings and select another route (turn to You barely have time to bring your sword up to **288**) or try opening one of the urns (turn to **52**).

parry the Skullghast as it swoops towards you.

Yellow flames form a crackling halo around it, but its snapping jaws are as black as an open tomb.

SKULLGHAST

VIGOUR 6

Roll two dice:

score 2 to 5 You are burned; lose 2 VIGOUR

score 6 to 12 The Skullghast loses 3 VIGOUR

If you win, turn to **155**. If you FLEE from this room and try the other door instead, throw the dice as usual and then turn to **150**.

119

You soon find yourself in an echoing pillared hall.

Do you have a jewelled pectoral? If so, turn to **251**.

If you do not have this item, turn to **93**.

120

The dark, cowled figures of perhaps a dozen Nightmare Guards cluster forward from the archway. In their midst stands the warlock Damontir.

He is little changed by the gulf of years since your last meeting - the sallow face and artful smile are the same, the long white hair swept back from the widow's peak, the pentagram tattoo around his left eye. The glint of insane evil in his gaze.

Damontir slowly draws off one of his velvet gauntlets to reveal a sparkling jewel - the Ring of Red Ruin. 'I would prefer to savour this moment,'

he says, *but I am in haste to acquire the idol. Your death will be but a brief and squalid interlude.'

You watch grimly as he levels the magical Ring

'It cannot be Doom!' you say, knowing that it is.

at you. There is a pause of several heartbeats.

'A score of knights saw him topple from the Tower Surely he does not expect you to cringe before him!

of Victory when his attack on the king was You tense up, ready to drop low and rush them, thwarted!'

but when the blast comes it is not meant for you.

'My servants retrieved the body and I used The coruscating flame lances from Damontir's ring necromancy to reanimate it. Sulsa Doom is no to strike poor Minki from your shoulder! The mad more than a mindless zombie now, but his skills as warlock cackles inhumanly as the monkey's chara warrior are undiminished - as you will discover.

red body drops from the walkway into the white Doom, slay this fool then guard the way until I clouds far below. Your shocked paralysis at this return!" Damontir and his black agents turn to sudden and needless slaughter lasts only a second, leave, but he lingers just a moment in the archway and then you are charging along the walkway, to murmur equably, 'Farewell, Dragon Knight.

swinging your flashing sword and roaring in You must excuse me for saying it, but I think your blood-rage. Damontir blanches and steps back, no Doom is upon you . . .'

longer laughing. You halt close to the ledge as the His laughter echoes back as he walks off into the Nightmare Guard move in to protect their master.

darkness. Turn to **160**.

You adopt a defensive stance and wait for them to come to you. The narrow walkway is to your **121**

advantage: they can only fight you one at a time.

Damontir, however, has other plans. Recovering You raise the small clay vial to your lips and pause.

his composure, he orders the Nightmare Guard The green liquid could be anything - a magical back and calls out to you, saying, There is another potion, as you hope, or a deadly poison which member of my retinue. I believe you knew him could kill you in an instant. But, in spite of the risk, once as Sulsa Doom.'

you hesitate for no more than a second. You must Two scared-looking slaves step forward into the stop Damontir whatever the cost to yourself, and if arch behind Damontir. The guttering light of the the Witchdoctor's sorcery cannot get you across torches they carry illuminates a figure waiting the lake then nothing will. You gulp the liquid there. He stands more than two metres tall, with a down, then scream as a terrible pain twists your huge falchion in each grey hand. His armour limbs. Sweat pours from you. You stare at your shows patches of rust and a mouldering cloak quaking hands

through a red glare of agony. You swathes him like a shroud. He advances stiffly on hear yourself screaming again and again, but your to the walkway.

mind feels strangely clear and almost distant from

the pain as you watch your hands forming into down, sightless and uncaring, at your tortured claws! Abruptly, your torment ceases. You look death throes. You have failed in your quest.

around at a scene which seems subtly altered - but it is you who have changed. To your astonishment, **124**

you find that you are now a green and gold quetzal bird! You spread your wings and launch yourself You hurl the spear at the approaching Dragon with out off the jetty. The experience of flight is a thrill all your strength. The spear flashes through the air you can barely believe, and you skim across the and sinks deep into the Dragon's left eye. The great reptile's roar of pain reverberates up the shaft lake to the silver pyramid. The moment you land as it thrashes about and tries to grip the spear with on the bottom step, the transformation reverses its taloned claws. When it rips the spear out at last, itself - this time painlessly - and moments later you see a wash of coppery blood on its red scales.

you are yourself again. Turn to **270**.

It roars again as it fixes its good eye upon you. You hastily raise your sword to battle the wounded **122**

monster as it surges through the churning waters towards you.

You walk along a narrow passage with only the wan, magical light from your sword to show you RED DRAGON

VIGOUR 18

the way. Stalking figures in bas-relief form a mar-Roll two dice:

tial frieze along the walls. After a short time you score 2 to 5 You are wounded; lose 4 VIGOUR

come to a bronze grille set across an opening in the score 6 to 12 The Dragon loses 3 VIGOUR

wall to your right. Minki clambers upon the metal bars, chattering excitedly. Ahead of you the pas-There is no opportunity to FLEE past it. If you win, sage recedes into the darkness. If you wish to go turn to **159**.

on, turn to **213**. If you wish to try and break the grille down, turn to **157**.

125

The two men respond to your shout of greeting by **123**

unlimbering their crossbows. You realize why as Your strength deserts you before you are even you draw nearer and focus on the insignia they halfway. Senses reeling, you slump to the floor. As wear - they are retainers of the crazed warlock your vision blurs and fades, the last thing you see Damontir. Somehow your hated foe has beaten is the row of carved faces along the wall. They stare you to the temple. His nefarious sorcery would

account for the strange amnesia of the old librarian score 5 to 7 You are wounded and lose 2

in Achtan.

VIGOUR

You have no time to ponder the matter further -

score 8 to 12 One of the Skullghasts loses 3

the two men are cranking up their bows. Grasping VIGOUR

your sword you pound across the red, sun-baked If and when you have destroyed six of the crea-earth towards them, bellowing out your ferocious tures, turn to **206**.

warcry as you run. With trembling hands they level their crossbows, aware that you will be upon **127**

them in seconds. Roll one die for their shots: Casting the ruby dust in their lifeless faces does score 1 Turn to 228

nothing to halt the Cadavers' relentless advance.

score 2 or 3 Both quarrels hit; you lose 6

They are almost upon you, and you can do nothing VIGOUR

now but fight them. Turn to **41**.

score 4 or 5 Only one hits you; lose 3 VIGOUR

score 6 Both shots go wide

128

If you are still alive, you close with them as they It takes you barely a second to reach the slab, discard the crossbows and draw their swords.

though that interval seems an eternity as you Turn to **241**.

watch the gap inexorably closing. There is now just half a metre between the floor and the descending **126**

slab. You dive, rolling on the ancient flagstones.

You watch the Skullghasts carefully, quickly learn-Throw two dice. If the total exceeds your current ing to spot the slight intensification of aura that AGILITY, turn to **17**. If the total is equal to or less indicates when one of them is about to swoop than your AGILITY, turn to **212**.

closer and burn you with its fire. You will need all your skill to defeat them.

129

Each Skullghast has a VIGOUR score of 6.

You have gone only a short distance further when *Roll two dice:*

you are brought up short by two native warriors score 2 You are grievously wounded; lose who step out to block your path. Their faces are 6 VIGOUR

hideously tattooed and yellow warpaint forms a score 3 to 4 You are sorely wounded; lose 4

flame-design on their smooth chests. You step VIGOUR

back slowly and start to turn, only to find that

another native has crept up behind you. They level their spears and circle around you, baring their filed teeth in bloodthirsty smiles. They are savage cannibals who will fight you to the death.

FIRST NATIVE

VIGOUR 9

SECOND NATIVE

VIGOUR 9

THIRD NATIVE

VIGOUR 6

Roll two dice:

score 2 to 3

You are hit and lose 9 VIGOUR

score 4 to 5

You are hit and lose 6 VIGOUR

score 6 to 7

You are hit and lose 3 VIGOUR

score 8 to 12 One of the Natives (you choose which) loses 3 VIGOUR

If you kill one, turn to **258** to continue the fight.

130

You find yourself in a cavernous hallway of ochre stone illuminated by the flickering luteous glow of thousands of candles that stand in ornate brazen racks. The walls to either side slant up to a vast, gilded ceiling supported by a line of monumental pillars along the centre of the hall. Niches in the walls, bordered by carved glyphs of painstaking complexity, contain mummified bodies wrapped in gold leaf. You must be in the burial chamber of the priest-kings of the Anku Empire. As you pass along the echoing hall towards the exits at the northern end, you notice that the gold leaf has been ripped away from several of the mummies. If you wish to go over and investigate, turn to **86**. If

you would rather walk on down the hall, turn to only to whirl in alarm as the doors slam shut **288**.

behind you. Two of Damontir's Nightmare Guard lurked unnoticed in the shadows behind the doors, **131**

and one of them now leaps forward and sinks its slender knife into your arm before you can defend You should have left the dagger where it lay -

yourself. Lose 3 VIGOUR and, if you are still alive, Damontir would hardly have dropped it by acci-turn to **249**.

dent. As you hold it, the image of bright metal and black leather hilt fade away. It is no longer a dagger **134**

you see before you, but a crawling jungle spider, transformed for a while by Damontir's magic and The door opens into a small room with no other left here as a trap for you. You cry out and hurl the exits. There is a black marble pedestal on which spider away - too late to avoid its bite. Your wrist rests a grinning skull. If you wish to step into the burns with pain as you hurriedly cut at the wound room to examine the skull, turn to **88**. If you wish with your knife. Lose 7 points of VIGOUR. If you to close this door and try the other one, turn to **150**.

are still alive, you crush the revolting creature under the heel of your boot. Still weak from the **135**

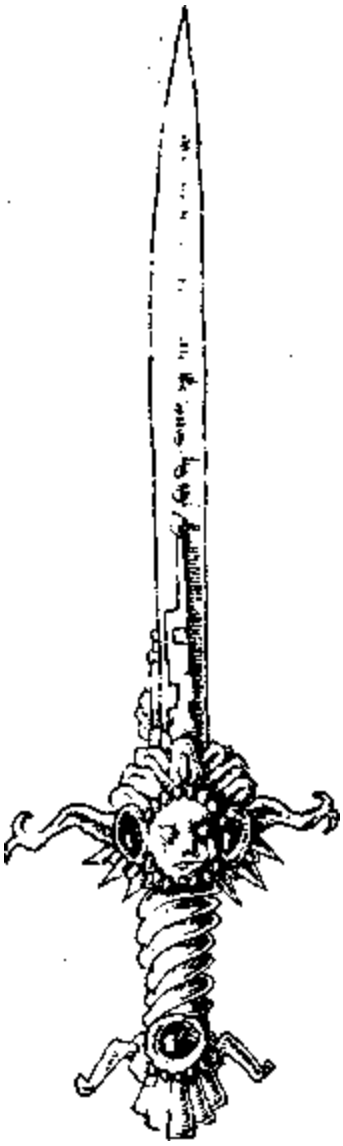
effects of its poison, you stumble on along the You go straight to the cavity in the wall where the corridor. Turn to **190**.

Elemental was imprisoned. A hot sulphurous stench wafts from it. Inside you can see a black **132**

ceramic ring. When you hook this out on the point You reach the bottom of the stairs and hurl your-of your sword and examine it, you find it bears a self aside. The flagstone at the foot of the staircase red glyph in the shape of the sun's disc. The ring is shatters as the boulder hits it, throwing up a spray still very hot after its exposure to the Elemental's of rock shards. You feel the floor quake under you flame and, since you cannot afford to waste time as the boulder rumbles across the room and waiting for it to cool, you will have to quench it smashes into the wall. Turn to **211**.

with water from your hipflask if you wish to take it with you. If you decide to do that, record on your Character Sheet that you have used up all your **133**

water and turn to **172**. If you do not want the ring, You find yourself in a small chamber from which you may leave it here and return to the main the only passage leads north. You make for this, corridor to head south (turn to **194**).



ported, spans the width of the shaft to a ledge on the eastern wall. Through the seething vapour you can see the black mouth of an archway leading from the other ledge. The walls of the shaft are filmed with rippling water, which is perhaps flowing in along ducts in the pyramid from the tropical storm above. It streams down into the depths of the shaft. Far below, you imagine a spring or underground lake. After allowing yourself a moment or two to take in this staggering vista, you concede that the only way onwards lies across the narrow walkway. Minki clings nervously to your shoulder as you step out on to it.

You are slightly more than two-thirds of the way across when, from the archway ahead, a cry rings out above the insistent murmur of trickling water:

'Ah, Dragon Knight! The flower of Paladosian chivalry! . . . And I, the blight that will wither the bloom.'

The voice is Damontir's.

Turn to **120**.

136

137

A short, downward-sloping tunnel opens on a You manage to twist yourself out of the way of the spectacle that takes your breath away. You are spear at the last moment. It whistles past you and standing on a jutting ledge on one side of a shaft embeds itself in the bole of a nearby tree. You nearly fifty metres across! It must go right down watch the bushes slowly swaying under your head into the heart of the pyramid - perhaps deeper and begin to wonder how you are going to free than that. You cannot see the bottom for billowing yourself. An insistent chattering attracts your clouds of steam rise up the shaft. A stone walk-attention. Craning your neck, you see that Minki way, improbably narrow and impossibly unsup-has climbed the tree. He is carrying your knife,

which you dropped when you set off the snare. He slides down the rope and you gratefully take the knife from him. It takes you only a few seconds to twist yourself into an upright position, cut through the rope around your ankle, and jump down to the ground. You put Minki on your shoulder and continue along the track. Turn to **267**.

138

You lose your grip on the cracked rock walls and plummet back into the pit with a startled cry. Lose 4 VIGOUR points. If you are still alive, you can only try again to climb up out of the pit. As before, you must try to roll equal to or less than your current AGILITY on two dice. If you succeed, turn to **197**. If you fail, you will fall again (losing another 4 VIGOUR points) and must continue to try until you either manage the climb or die trying.

139

Lose 3 more points of PSI. If your *current* PSI had dropped to 0 or less now, turn to **247**. Otherwise, you stagger on and suddenly emerge from the smoke into clean air. You look back to see the smoke cloud writhing on the steps behind you like a living thing. As your panic dies, the full harrowing horror of your experience settles on you. You find yourself trembling uncontrollably as you continue downwards. Turn to **100.**

140

lake of copper. So must you. Perhaps you have a witchdoctor's medicine pouch? If so, turn to **2**. If You put your shoulder to the statue and heave. It not, turn to **78**.

seems rooted to the spot. At last your titanic effort is rewarded as the statue topples, crashing down **142**

into a thicket. Lose 2 VIGOUR for your exertion in the sweltering heat. You have uncovered the stone You walk along the narrow passage, your every lid of a sarcophagus in the dank earth beneath the step stirring up dust which filters the light of your fallen statue. Maggots and tiny black beetles sword eerily. Bas-relief figures stand out from the squirm and scuttle for cover. Minki snatches up a walls - warriors marching to a flowery death. After beetle and savours it while you stoop to examine some distance you pass an opening in the wall to the sarcophagus. You seize the carved handholds your left. It is blocked by a heavy bronze grille and, and open the lid. At that instant, a momentary since you can see nothing but a bare, dusty tunnel breeze stirs the trees and makes you shiver. Minki beyond it, you decide to continue heading west.

runs back from the grave, chattering in fright. But Eventually you enter a large room where savage there is nothing to fear'- only the mouldering carvings merge with the walls and pillars. Turn to bones of a long-dead Anku noble. The skeleton **257**.

could be formed of polished jade, coated as it is with a lime green enamel which has preserved it through the centuries. It holds a gilded sceptre in one hand and wears a pectoral from which sparkling jewels hang like crystallized droplets. You can **143**

take either or both of these items; remember to note them on your Character Sheet if you do.

You reach out your hand . . . (turn to **259**) . . .

Turning away from the rifled grave, you and Minki proceed deeper into the entangling jungle. Turn to **144**

31.

Even before you hand has touched the drum, twin *(illustration on previous page)* beams of dazzling light stab from the statue's opal eyes. The beams ignite your armour within sec-141

onds. Shrouded in leaping flames, you back away.

From the footprints in the dust in the passage you You stumble blindly across the room, shrieking know that your enemy has found a way across the wildly as the fire blisters your skin. Your only hope

lies in finding the pool. Roll one die. If you score 1

147

to 3, turn to **289**. If you score 4 to 6, turn to **81**.

You pause by a face whose jaw is set in a look of truculent arrogance. Alert for traps or poison **145**

spikes, you reach into its mouth and probe the None of the other wonders of the Temple of Katak space within. Your fingers quickly find a small can have prepared you for this sight. You step hole, far too narrow for you to get your hand into.

from the gloom of the passage on to a stone jetty You shrug and step back from the wall. The face beside a fabulous lake of liquid copper. Ahead of glowers sightlessly back at you. Intending to con-you across the shimmering surface rises a replica of tinue along the tunnel, you turn. Then you notice the pyramid itself, some eight metres high and the stifling heat. Your breath comes in short shal-wrought entirely of silver. Its stepped facade low gasps, but you cannot seem to get any air. You sparkles in the brilliant glare of light globules that start to run back the way you came, but your legs float mysteriously about in the air. Though staggive way and you crash to the floor. The sword gered to behold such unimaginable riches, you slips from your enfeebled grasp and, with your remember that you have come seeking something strength gone, you cannot rise. The only sound is of still greater value - the lost idol of Katak - and the tortured sobbing of your breath in the oxygen-even now your enemy may be approaching it.

starved air. Soon that too is silenced. Your adven-You stare out over the molten lake. How are you ture ends here.

to cross it? If you have a black pearl, turn to **219**. If **148**

you did not come across such an item on your quest, turn to **141**.

Which of your items will you try:

A spear? Turn to **124**

146

A gilded sceptre? Turn to **252**

There is another bronze grille at the end of this Powdered ruby? Turn to **264**

tunnel. As before, forcing the grille will cost you 1

If you have none of these, you must fight - turn to point of VIGOUR. If you wish to force the grille open and head west along the passage on the other **182**.

side of it, turn to **266** (remembering to deduct the **149**

point of VIGOUR). Otherwise, you may return to the passage you were in before and head on (turn One of the crossbow quarrels punctures your lung.

to **213**).

You are abruptly drained of strength and fall

helplessly on the oven-hot stone steps. Disjointed shouts and fragments of memories jostle at the edge of consciousness. You are aware of Minki tugging at your cloak with his tiny paws as you sprawl amid the weathered chunks of masonry, coughing your lifeblood on to the ancient ruins.

Grotesque carvings leer at you from either side of the stairway. You try to drag yourself up the remaining steps, but the world is spinning around you and you no longer have any idea whether you are going up or down. It seems that a cloud covers the sun as the shadow of oblivion settles on you.

Damontir's sentries will see to it that you never awaken.

150

A gust of wind arises as if from nowhere as you swing the door open. The thick dust ripples like the surface of a lake and then rises up to form three translucent columns around you. Images take shape within the swirling motes. At first you think it is a trick of the light, but then you see glimmering eyes like candle flames and swords like shafts of moonlight. Three Spectral Warriors surround you, ghosts from ages past. You must pray that the magic in your shining sword is enough to lay these murderous phantoms.

First SPECTRAL WARRIOR VIGOUR 9

Second SPECTRAL WARRIOR VIGOUR 9

Third SPECTRAL WARRIOR VIGOUR 9

Roll two dice: not budge for all your pummelling and pounding.

score 2 to 3 You are hit three times; lose 9

At last, exhausted by your futile efforts, you sit VIGOUR *and 1 PSI*

down on the floor. You are trapped. Falling into a score 4 to 5 You are hit twice; lose 6 VIGOUR

spirit of wry fatalism, you allow yourself a bitter score 6 to 7 You are hit once; lose 3 VIGOUR

smile as you lift a handful of gems and watch them score 8 to 12 One of the Spectral Warriors (you trickle through your fingers. Like the skeleton choose which) loses 3 VIGOUR

beside you, you have stumbled upon the lavish riches of the priest-kings' treasure vault but will They surround you and you cannot FLEE. If you never escape to enjoy your wealth. Already it is destroy one of them, turn to **181**.

getting difficult to breathe. This sealed chamber will be your tomb.

151

The Revenant manages to seize you by the arm.

154

You can feel its skeletal fingers biting deep into You stand in an antechamber from which two your flesh, followed by a tingling sensation passages lead west. Incomprehensible votive carv-through your whole body. Roll two dice. If the ings cover every inch of the walls. As you step off score is less than or equal to your current PSI score, the dais it rises back up to the roof, sealing out the turn to **84**. If the score exceeds your PSI, turn to daylight and the hiss of falling rain. You hold out **243**.

your enchanted sword before you. A blue radiance shimmers from its blade, illuminating your sur-152

roundings and throwing the carvings on the near A winding passage takes you steadily west and wall into sharp relief. Which way will you go from eventually emerges into a small vestibule. From here:

here, a narrow passage heads north and steps lead Along the left-hand passage? Turn to **272**

down from the west wall. You decide to go down Along the right-hand passage? Turn to **142**

the steps. Turn to **207**.

153

155

As you step through, the secret door swings shut The second blow of your enchanted sword shivers behind you with a dull and ominous crunch. You the undead monster into a hundred fragments.

immediately attempt to open it again, but it will You search the room thoroughly but can find

nothing of interest, so you return to the hall and scuttles into it. The visor shuts again with a harsh try the other door. Turn to **150**.

clang. The armour's eyeslit burns with the glow of hellfire now. From it comes the furnace-roar of air **156**

being drawn through the visor to feed the inferno within. As you bring your sword-blade up, the You find yourself in a vaulted vestibule with brass armour steps from the alcove and moves ponder-double doors directly ahead of you and, to your ously towards you.

left, a corridor leading west. If you wish to try the doors, turn to **170**. If you would rather head along FIRE ELEMENTAL VIGOUR 12

the corridor, turn to **119**.

Roll two dice:

score 2 to 6

You are hit; lose 3 VIGOUR

157

score 7 to 12 The Fire Elemental loses 3

VIGOUR

The effort will cost you 1 point of VIGOUR. If you wish to do it, deduct this from your *current* If you FLEE into the tunnel, turn to **292**. If you VIGOUR score and turn to **76**. If you have now decide to stand and fight, turn to **29** after three changed your mind and wish to continue along the Combat Rounds.

passage, turn to **213**.

159

158

You watch the steaming waters close over the You soon discover that the plug is wedged tightly Dragon's carcass. Its blood is a copperish scum on into the wall, requiring several jarring blows with the surface of the lake. When it has sunk from sight your sword-pommel to loosen it. No sooner have in the turbid depths and the lake is still once more, you unstoppered the hole in the wall than a jet of you continue along the line of rocks to the arch in red flame leaps out of it towards your face. You the north wall. Turn to **156**.

drop the heavy plug and dodge back with a cry of alarm, flinching at the fierce heat as the fire **160**

streams past you like molten ruby. Watching the Trying not to look down, you advance along the flame spiral across the room, you feel sure there is perilous walkway. Sulsa Doom waits for you with an image within it - a flickering orange lizard his heavy black swords raised.

running on thin air. Suddenly the visor of the bronze armour snaps up and the fiery salamander SULSA DOOM

VIGOUR 15

Roll two dice:

score 2 to 3 You take two wounds - lose 6

VIGOUR

score 4 to 6 You are hit once and lose 3

VIGOUR

score 7 to 12 Sulsa Doom loses 3 VIGOUR

If you win, turn to **260**. If you wish to FLEE by diving into the shaft, throw the dice as usual and then turn to **227**.

161

You open the urn and invert it over the smoking form of the dead Phoenix. Cold black cinders pour out and soon cover the body in an ashen blanket that prevents it from catching alight. You are on the point of leaving when you notice one of the Phoenix's flame-coloured feathers lying nearby -

one of the many it lost during your ferocious fight.

You may take a feather if you wish (remember to note it down on your Character Sheet). Will you now go east along the tunnel under the balcony (turn to **91**), or ascend the other staircase (turn to **16**)?

162

You activate the ring just in time. A stream of incandescent white flame passes harmlessly through your body as the power of the ring turns you insubstantial for a few seconds. You become solid once more. The ring crumbles into corroded

fragments now that its magic has been expended.

niche in the stone. A minute or so later, the two You must act quickly now, before the dragon can men draw level with your hiding place. You had unleash another jet of fire. Will you fight it with believed you were the first to rediscover the pyra-your sword (turn to **182**), or use one of the items mid so you are shocked to discover two armed and you have collected (turn to **148**)?

armoured warriors patrolling it. You are still more shocked when you hear their voices and realize **163**

they are from your own land. But all becomes sickeningly clear when one of them half turns and You pass through a succession of high peaked you recognize the black-and-white crest on his chambers. A long cloistered gallery runs parallel to surcoat, for it marks him as one of Damontir's these and, although your eyes cannot penetrate men. Somehow your hated foe has beaten you to the utter darkness beyond the pillars, you gra-the temple, perhaps by a margin of only hours or dually become convinced that something is mov-minutes. They stop to swig rough gin from a ing along the gallery, keeping pace with you as you hipflask, and you take the opportunity to eaves-go from room to room. A slight noise so alarms drop on what they are saying.

Minki that he scrambles up your cloak to perch on

'Blow this for a lark,' growls one, slapping away your shoulder. You wait for more than a minute -

a fly that was feasting on his beefy neck. 'I can take tense, standing perfectly still, staring into the black the boredom and the heat, but these insects are arches of the gallery. You can see nothing there.

goin' ter drink me dry before the boss gets back.

Finally you accept that your mind is starting to play Why didn't 'e take us wiv him, I want ter know.'

tricks on you. However, just as you are about to

'Yer great burke!' His companion spits on the continue on your way, another sound echoes out baked earth. 'Yer better off out 'ere, ent yer? Want of the darkness. Minki is so panicky by now that he ter go wanderin' around an old tomb wiv a fruit-jumps right up on to the top of your head and cake like Damontir? Never come out again, would holds on tight by grabbing your ears! You gently yer?'

lift him off. As your fingers encircle his tiny frame,

'Temple,' replied the first, gargling his gin before you can feel the pounding of his heart. Or is it your swallowing it.

own pulse? Turn to **185**.

'Yer what?'

'It's not a tomb, it's a temple. I heard the boss **164**

say.'

You retreat into the cool, ink-black shadows beside The second man snorts. 'Temple, tomb, where's the great stairway and press yourself back into a the difference? Damontir wouldn't trust the likes of

us wiv all that treasure around, would 'e? That's expert hands of the Nightmare Guard it became a what 'e's got them freaks - whassit, Nightmare lethal weapon which almost robbed you of your Guards - for, innit?'

life. You drop it by the limp black robe and, You have heard enough. If Damontir is here gathering up Minki on your shoulder, descend a with his fearsome Nightmare Guard then you have staircase at one end of the balcony to the floor of no time to waste. Will you attack the two men (turn the great hall. You move along past the screened to **70**) or will you try to scale the steps to the top brazier, your own shadow sharp against the dif- without them noticing (turn to **184**)?

fuse bars of light and shade, towards a pair of doors in the centre of the east wall below the **165**

balcony. The doors are heavy blocks of mahogany, inlaid with sculpted panels of smooth coral. There The last Native battles on, but you have wiped the is no other way out of the hall, so you pull them vicious smile from his face now!

open and step through. Turn to **136**.

Roll two dice:

score 2 to 3 You are hit and lose 3 VIGOUR

167

score 4 to 12 The Native loses 3 VIGOUR

You swing the door open and peer into the cham-If you win, turn to **61**.

ber beyond. A few footprints mark the dust near the doorway, but Damontir seems not to have **166**

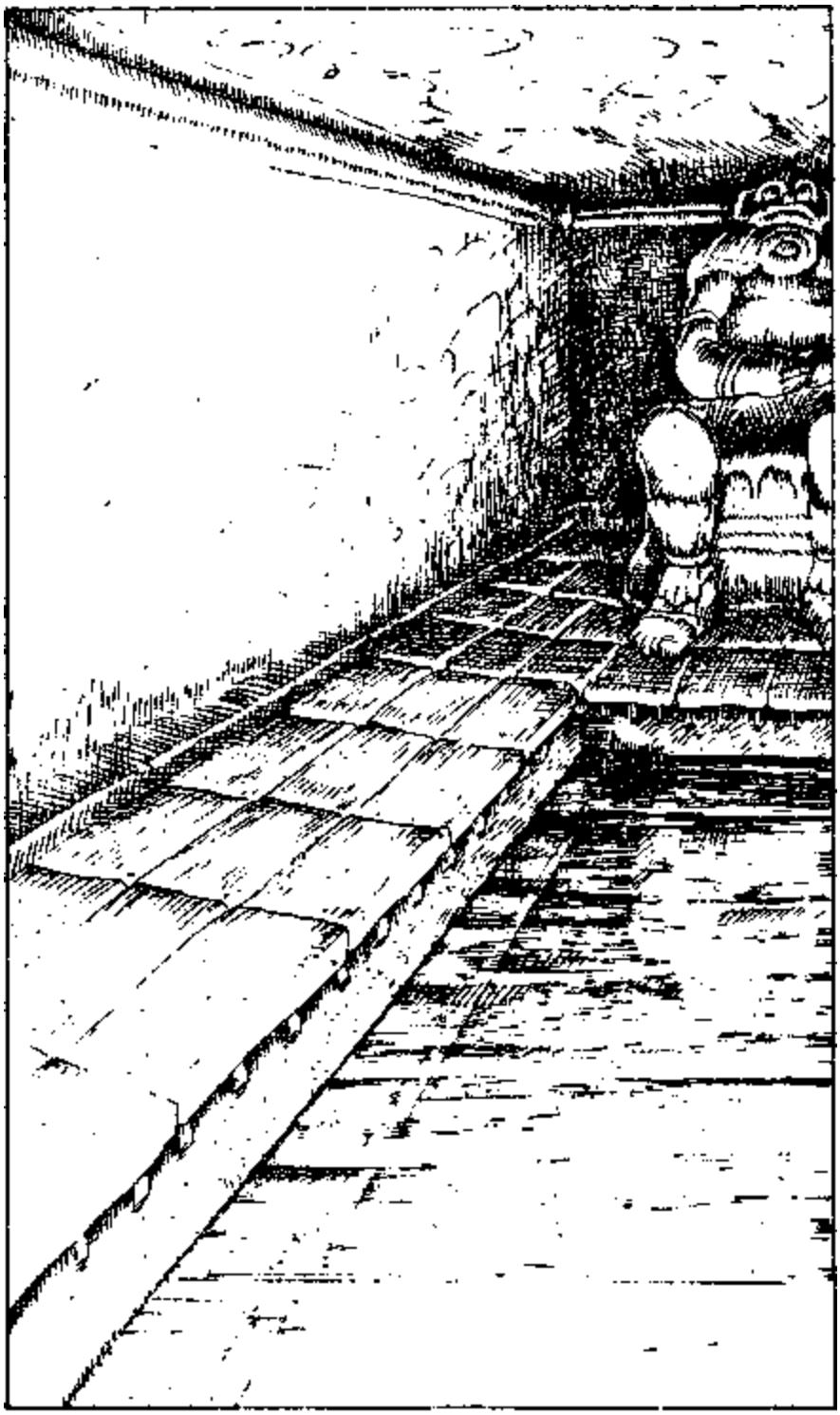
gone any further into the room. The white stone Minki shrieks and chatters and cavorts along the reflects your sword's light starkly. A huge golden balustrade, elated at your victory. A sulphurous flame-symbol dominates the opposite wall. Below tang assaults your nostrils. The robe at your feet is this there is a marble slab on which lies a sparkling crumpling into shapeless folds and a thick yellow pendant. You may either cross the room and vapour wafts from it as the body within disinte-examine the pendant (turn to **37**) or close the door grates. The "fate of all the Nightmare Guard when and continue west (turn to **269**).

slain is to return to the smouldering ashes from which they were created.

168

You lift the creature's garrotte from where it lies.

It is only a scarf of midnight blue silk decorated You cannot stand; you think you may have broken with a pattern of white skulls - a thing seemingly your leg. Writhing white flames form a high barrier harmless, even if in questionable taste. Yet in the all around, and you look up to see a slender figure



silhouetted against them. You struggle to rise as Damontir approaches, but it is no use.

'Ah, Dragon Knight,' he murmurs, standing over you, 'how fitting that you should grovel on the floor at my feet.'

The Ring of Red Ruin sparkles as he brings his arm up. Damontir gloats, knowing you cannot avoid the blast. Your life ends in a searing flare of magical energy.

169

With Minki fleeing like the wind ahead of you, you race back into the antechamber. The creature lopes awkwardly in pursuit, its huge eye bobbing as it tries to take aim for the blast that will end your life.

You are directly between the creature and the tapestry-draped wall. You turn to face it. The single eye shines like the sun, bloated with energy.

You are sure it is about to fire, and you hurl yourself aside with a speed born of desperation.

Roll two dice, trying to score equal to or less than your *current* AGILITY. If you succeed, turn to **262**.

If you fail, turn to **287**.

170

Cool air gusts out as you swing the doors open - a welcome contrast to the humid warmth of the dragon's lair. You enter a large room with a low level ceiling that is unsupported by beams or pillars. Ripples of pale blue light wash across the grey stone, reflected from a pool which runs the

length of the room. Steps lead down into the pool, you wish to inspect the stone figurine, turn to **23**. If which does not appear to be very deep. At the far you would rather ignore it and press on, turn to **5**.

end of the room squats a large, reddish-black statue with fire opals for eyes. As you approach the **174**

statue, you see that its hands are folded in its lap Disappointingly, you experience no surge of and cupped to hold an ebony drum. If you wish to strength as you fasten the belt around your waist.

step up to the statue and take the drum, turn to Perhaps it has magical properties that will become **144**. Otherwise you could investigate the pool obvious later. If you have not already done so, you (turn to **49**) or else leave this room and head west may now take the ring (turn to **45**) or the bottle of along the corridor (turn to **119**).

blue liquid (turn to **6**). If you are ready to leave, turn to **240**.

171

You reach out your hand . . . (turn to **259**). . .

175

You will need to be fleet of foot to outdistance the **172**

hurtling boulder. Roll two dice. If the total is less You slip the ring on to your finger. It is a magic than or equal to your *current* AGILITY score, turn Ring of Healing. You may use this *once* during your to **132**. If the total is greater than your AGILITY

adventure, at any time except during a battle. It then the boulder catches up with you - turn to **46**.

will immediately restore your VIGOUR to its *normal* level. Remember that there is only enough **176**

magic in the Ring of Healing for one use, so you If you have a Phoenix feather, turn to **47**. If not, must choose the moment carefully. Taking a deep turn to **245**.

breath, you head back along the tunnel to the main corridor and make your way south. Turn to **194**.

177

173

As you drink from the chalice, you feel it draining your reserves of psychic strength. Lose 1 point of The crude trail ends at a small clearing, beyond PSI. With a cry of bitter rage, you hurl it from you which the trees cluster thickly once more. In the and watch it skid across the floor into the shadows.

middle of the clearing you see a small, lichen-Was it, then, only a baneful lure - a sadistic jest stained stone figurine lying on the matted grass. If played upon you by men who died long ages past?

Cursing the depletion of your PSI, you head west could leave this room without the drum and head out of the room. Turn to **87**.

west (turn to **119**).

178

180

If you were stung by the Scorpion, turn to **26**. If you managed to defeat it without being stung even Your curiosity is aroused by a granite monolith, once, you now scramble up out of the pit and leave carved to depict a squat demon with a grinning through the door in the north wall (turn to **152**).

death's-head, holding a plaque in its clawed hands. You step up on to the circular dais in front of the monolith to examine this plaque more **179**

closely. Most of the glyphs that scar the crumbling stone are indecipherable, their meaning lost in As you reach for the drum, brilliant rays lance from antiquity, but the five symbols which dominate the the statue's opal eyes. Suddenly flames spurt up centre of the plaque are clear to you. They repre- around you. You start back, but your mounting sent the principal deities of the Anku Empire. A panic changes to bewildered amazement when you jagged line corresponds to the thunder-god Tlal; realize that the flames are not burning you. Within Tonu the sun-god is shown as a disc fringed with moments they dwindle and die. You are left radial lines; the large stylized flame in the middle is unmarked, completely unharmed! Obviously some dearly the emblem of Katak himself; the open sorcery in the water of the pool protected you.

outline of a skull denotes Ictec, the god of the Quickly, before the defensive magic can wear off, netherworld; and the last glyph, a short spiral, you step up to the statue. However, now that you represents the Anku deity of arts and crafts, whose are this close, you notice something - its arms are name is now forgotten. In some mysterious way pivoted at the shoulders. They are doubtless coun-you feel compelled to touch one of these glyphs -

terweighted, and if you remove the drum they will but which:

swing upwards and activate some hidden mechanism. In order to avoid this, you consider substitut-The jagged line? Turn to **259**

ing another item in its place. If you wish to do this, The sun-disc? Turn to **143**

decide which item you will use and turn to **67**. If The stylized flame? Turn to **222**

you are not prepared to relinquish any of the items The skull symbol? Turn to **171**

you have collected, you could just take the drum The spiral? Turn to **281**

and risk setting off a trap (turn to **195**), or you *(illustration on previous page)*

181

You fancy you hear a faint howl as one of the Spectral Warriors dissolves into dust and scattered light. The others fight on without a sound.

Roll two dice:

score 2 to 3

You are hit twice, lose 6 VIGOUR

score 4 to 5

You are hit once; lose 3 VIGOUR

score 6 to 12 One of the Spectral Warriors (you choose which) loses 3 VIGOUR

You have the opportunity to FLEE now by retreat-ing the way you came. If you do that, turn to **250**

(remember that they will *both* try to hit you as you run so you must throw the dice twice). If you fight on and destroy another, turn to **202**.

182

Even an enchanted sword like yours seems a puny weapon against so massive and powerful a creature - but you have no other choice!

RED DRAGON VIGOUR 18

Roll two dice:

score 2 to 7 You are wounded, lose 4 VIGOUR

score 8 to 12 The Dragon loses 3 VIGOUR

You cannot get past it to FLEE. If you kill it, turn to **159**.

183

The Revenant was an accomplished magician in life, and you are unable to resist the powerful spell

it has cast upon you. Through the sensation of staring, green-tinted skeleton rushes out of the numbing cold, you feel something stirring within darkness, flailing at you with its cracked fingers.

your body. You drop your sword and stare in The Anku nobleman has come to reclaim what you horror as green tendrils erupt from your skin and stole from his grave.

twist around you. As the magical creepers choke REVENANT VIGOUR 9

the life from you, the last thing you see is the grisly rictus of your foe as it tears the jewelled pectoral *Roll two dice:*

from your chest.

score 2 to 6 You are wounded; lose 3 VIGOUR

score 7 to 12 The Revenant loses 3 VIGOUR

184

You cannot FLEE - if you do not destroy the You are barely halfway up in your steep climb creature now it will pursue you forever. If the when a shout rings out from below. You have been Revenant wounds you on two *consecutive* dice rolls, spotted. As the two sentries ready their crossbows, turn to **151**. If you manage to defeat it without it you race up towards the summit. You are almost ever hitting you twice in a row, turn to **286**.

there when they level their bows and shoot.

Roll one die:

186

score 1 Turn to **149**

Wraith-like figures that seem to have arisen from score 2 or 3 Both quarrels hit you; lose 6

an awful nightmare drift and recede in the thick VIGOUR

smoke. Their icy insubstantial touch drains your score 4 or 5 Only one hits you; lose 3 VIGOUR

very soul. Lose 3 PSI points. Your nerve breaks score 6 They both miss you

and you scream again and again as you run down If you are still alive, you stagger up the remaining the fog-shrouded stairs. You cannot see clearly few steps and on to the flat top of the pyramid out where to tread, and suddenly your foot slips on the of the sentries' line of sight. Turn to **102**.

edge of a step and you start to fall forwards. Try to roll your current AGILITY or less on two dice. If **185**

you succeed, turn to **291**. If you fail, turn to **115**.

You leave Minki in the middle of the room and **187**

advance slowly towards the cloistered gallery, holding your sword ahead to drive back the sha-You hurry back along the tunnel before the great dows. Suddenly there is a ghastly shriek and a bird can resurrect itself once more. Crossing the

coruscating floor, you hurriedly ascend the other stairway. Turn to **16**.

188

Giving your captors no time to react, you lunge forward and rip your sword from the startled native's grasp. Two of the natives dart forward to seize you. You cut them down with a single stroke.

Blood sprays across the faces of the Witchdoctor and his chief warriors and, as they flinch back, you make good your escape. Turn to **189**.

189

You race to the edge of the clearing and into the waiting jungle. The natives are not slow to give chase. You plunge on through a sea of sharp dark leaves that cut you like spikes of volcanic glass.

Fortunately, although the natives know the jungle rather better than you do, they continually give away their position with their shouts and hunting cries. Eventually you manage to slip right between their front runners and the main search party and leave them far behind as you make your way roughly north-west. You think the Temple of Katak must lie somewhere ahead of you. Roll one die. If you score 1-3, turn to **18**. If you score 4-6, turn to **246**.

190

You walk along the corridor and emerge on to a high balcony overlooking a large hall. Carved

panels on the walls depict ceremonies of devotion If you kill it, turn to **166**. If you try to FLEE down to the flame-god Katak. Looking down to the floor the steps from the balcony, do not roll the dice as of the hall, you see six fretwork screens of gleam-you would normally do, but turn to **75**.

ing silver placed in a hexagon about a crackling brazier. The leaping flame spreads a cobweb of shadows from the screens right out across the hall.

191

Within the area enclosed by the screens, the Something hard clamps around your shins. You firelight is thrown back in bright reticular patterns look down to discover that your legs are shackled of great beauty. How extraordinary it is to stand with glowing chains, icy cold and green as emer- here and gaze upon this work of the Anku priest-ald. You seize them and twist and strain at the lords, this living art that has outlived the civiliza- links, but all your strength is not enough to break tion that created it by more than two thousand them. These are magical chains which the pendant years!

has created in your own mind - you cannot shatter You are so absorbed in admiration for the them, nor sever them with your sword's keen ancient artifacts and carvings that you do not blade. Damontir left the pendant as bait for you, notice a black-clad form drop from the lintel of the having first placed a curse upon it, in case your archway behind you. It is one of the Nightmare battle with Sulsa Doom did not have the outcome Guard, Damontir's retinue of unhuman assassins.

he hoped for. Reduce your *current* AGILITY score As it stalks towards you, Minki suddenly utters a to 3 because of the chains. (If your AGILITY is shrill cry and skitters away nervously. His warning *already* 3 or less, reduce it by 1 point.) Furious with gives you just enough time to whirl and strike at yourself for succumbing to Damontir's ploy, you the oncoming assailant with your sword. It falls shuffle from the room and head west once more.

back for an instant, then lunges at you again, Turn to **269**.

anxious to encircle your neck with its garrotte of weighted silk.

192

NIGHTMARE GUARD

VIGOUR 12

Although single-minded in their defence of the temple, the undead Skullghasts are not able to *Roll two dice:*

truly think and reason. They recognize the pectoral score 2 to 5 Turn to **63**

and, believing you to be a noble of the ancient score 6 to 12 The Nightmare Guard loses 3

Anku Empire, break off the attack and return to VIGOUR

their niches. You breathe a sigh of relief at your

narrow escape and depart through the opening in tive motif runs around it - angular carvings show-the western wall. Turn to **163**.

ing warriors with their bodies twisted in the lusty barbaric wardance of the Anku Empire. You are **193**

just fastening the straps of your backpack, having put the drum inside it, when the massive arms of After discarding your old cloak, you take the cloak the statue begin to pivot up. You hear the creak of of feathers down from where it hangs and drape it chains and weights behind the walls and start to across your shoulders. As you turn to leave the hurry towards the exit, ready to break into a run at room you see that Minki has become quite agi-the first indication of danger. The mechanism you tated, darting to and fro as he utters long wailing have set in motion, however, is not a trap at all.

cries. You soon see the cause of his alarm - the Instead, one of the blocks forming the eastern wall serpentine pillars are slowly uncoiling. There is the descends slowly into the floor to reveal a passage.

sound of stone grinding against stone as the huge If you wish to leave the room by this new route, creatures move to block your exit. You tighten your turn to **298**. If you would rather return to the grip on your sword and prepare to give battle.

vestibule and take the corridor heading west, turn First STONE SERPENT VIGOUR 12

to **119**.

Roll two dice:

196

score 2 to 5 You are wounded; lose 3 VIGOUR

score 6 to 12 The Serpent loses 3 VIGOUR

The native spear buries itself in your chest, bring-ing your adventure to an abrupt and bloody con-If you win, turn to **237**.

clusion.

194

197

After a while the corridor you are in is joined by Sweat beads your brow and your arms are tremb-another leading east. Will you take the new corri- ling with the strain when you finally reach the top dor (turn to **205**) or continue walking south (turn to and haul yourself over on to the floor of the **8**)?

chamber. Your sword lies on the plinth and you must retrieve it before going on - not only is it your **195**

main weapon, it is also your only light source. You At first nothing happens when you lift the drum jump back across on to the plinth, wincing at the from the statue's lap. You see now that a decora-pain from your injured ankle. The black vapour

has dispersed into nebulous wisps by now. You lift corridor in front of you. A quick backward glance your sword so that its glow illuminates the interior tells you there is no retreat - another slab is sliding of the open casket. There you see a bronze ring, a down to block the corridor behind you. Within wide belt studded with polished opals and a quartz moments, the section of corridor in which you bottle containing a blue liquid. If you wish to leave stand will be completely sealed off. If you wish to all of these where they are, turn to **240**. If not, run forward and try to get under the slab before it which item will you take first:

reaches the floor, turn to **128**. If you would rather stand where you are and see what happens, turn The belt?

Turn to **174**

to **34**.

The ring?

Turn to **45**

The bottle?

Turn to **6**

200

Your climb to the summit is not nearly so arduous **198**

as you had expected. Although a shimmering haze The battle ends with the Golem victorious, stand-of heat rises from the dark basalt steps, there is a ing like a colossus amid the broken and twisted steady breeze which seems refreshingly cool after bodies of the Cadavers. It is not undamaged - the your trek through the steaming jungle. The sun Cadavers' rain of blows cleaved great sheets of burns relentlessly down, throwing elaborate sha- stone from its body, and one hand has been dows across the grotesque carvings which leer at shattered at the wrist. As its dull eyes fall upon you intervals from the sides of the stairway. These it begins to move haltingly forward. Will you fight stone faces are fanciful representations of Katak's it (turn to **265**) or avoid combat by running south sixteen Celestial Emissaries, once venerated as (turn to **72**)?

demigods. Ignorant of this, little Minki capers irreverently over them as the two of you ascend the steps. As you near the top, you pause and turn to **199**

stare out across the trackless verdant expanse. You You make your way along a wide, low-ceilinged cannot see the river itself from here, but you can corridor, past basalt stonework inlaid with ab-just make out the sparkling tip of the crystal spire stract patterns in red and grey marble. As your next to which your ship lies at anchor. Minki tugs sword-light dispels the darkness, you see that the at your boot, hopping from one foot to the other on corridor veers sharply left some distance ahead of the oven-hot stone as if to tell you that he does not you. Suddenly, with a loud scraping sound, a appreciate the delay. Chuckling, you mount the stone slab begins to descend from the roof of the last few steps to the pyramid's flat top. Turn to **102**.

201

If you FLEE back the way you came, turn to **250**. If you destroy your ghostly foe, turn to **106**.

As the creature dies, the lines of its form shift and alter. You are standing over the dead body of the Witchdoctor. Did you truly fight a demon, or was it **203**

merely an illusion that the old man conjured? The The cloak stirs in the rushing air and spreads to truth remains forever unknowable. You expect the form a resplendent canopy across your back. Your warriors of the tribe to fall upon you at any rate of descent slows to a gentle glide as you spiral moment, to bring you down with sheer weight of down the shaft to land safely on a rock in the numbers. You are prepared to sell your life dearly, middle of the lake. The cloak immediately moults, but when you turn to face them you see that there falling away in a shower of magnificently coloured will be no need for that. The entire village is plumage. Its magic saved your life, but it was bowing down to you, overawed by your defeat of usable only once. All around you lie the seething their Witchdoctor. One of them crawls forward waters of the lake. Rock outcroppings jut up at and offers you the Witchdoctor's bone wand. You intervals out of the bubbling surface. Through the take it (remember to note it down on your Charac- shimmer of heat and rising steam you can see a ter Sheet), but you have no intention of assuming black archway in the north wall of the shaft. You his position in the tribe if that is what is meant by start to make your way towards this by jumping the gesture. As you turn to leave, you are pleased from rock to rock, using them as stepping stones.

to see Minki waiting for you by the edge of the Turn to **275**.

village. As the natives cower and moan, you head off into the jungle. Turn to **80**.

204

You dive back out of the way and the bolt hits the **202**

floor where you were standing. A thin wisp of The last of the three lunges at you with its ethereal vaporized stone curls up from where it struck.

sword. On the sombre, dusty mask of its dead Turn to **242**.

features no flicker of expression shows.

205

Roll two dice:

score 2 to 3 You are hit; lose 3 VIGOUR

Reaching the end of the corridor, you walk up a score 4 to 12 The Spectral Warrior loses 3

ramp paved with translucent rose-tinted onyx and VIGOUR

find yourself in a funerary chamber. Four

embalmed warriors dressed in their gilded and plumed battle finery stand in alcoves, silent sen-tinels of the past. Seeing a passage in the extreme end of the south wall, you step off the ramp towards it. At the very moment you do so, your worst fears are realized - a reddish glow arises within the alcoves, limning their occupants eerily, and then the dead warriors stir! As they lurch towards you, you raise your sword. Its cold light illuminates the lustreless ashen skin, the pupil-less eyes like antique ivory. Their movements are awkward and faltering at first, but gradually acquire energy, fluidity - even a certain nightmarish grace.

Perhaps there is an item in your backpack you might use against them? If so, turn to **20**. If not, you must fight - turn to **41**.

206

The remaining Skullghasts abandon the attack and float back up to their niches. You are left standing amid the shattered shards of bone, some still flickering with occult flame. In the aftermath of the harrowing battle you find yourself trembling uncontrollably. It is only when you see Minki's familiar face peering quizzically up at you that you regain your composure enough to continue onwards. Turn to **53**.

207

You find yourself in a narrow chamber. There is another flight of steps leading up, but you are

more interested in the wide spiral staircase in the sunlight as they circle to attack you with their long middle of the room. You look down, but can see spears. Turn to **117**.

only darkness below. Sure that this is the correct route to your goal, you begin to descend the spiral **210**

staircase. You notice tendrils of smoke curling After a while the corridor you are in joins a second around your ankles. A thick, filmy haze hangs in corridor running east and west. You decide to take the air, and as you go on it seems that you are the western branch. Turn to **190**.

walking down through curtains of black lace. The darkness closes in around you. Coughing, you **211**

stumble on although you can barely see the steps through the dense smoke. Faint moans and cries of Through thick clouds of dust thrown up by the terror and anguish drift half-heard to your ears, as boulder's passing, your shining sword illuminates though from an unimaginable distance. Within the a passage leading west. There is another corridor veils of smoke you catch brief glimpses of shapes to the south, but that is now blocked by the and faces which chill your blood. If you have a boulder. If you have a Ring of Intangibility and conch shell trumpet, turn to **244**. If you do not have wish to use it, you could go south (turn to **64**).

this item, turn to **85**.

Otherwise you must head west (turn to **290**).

208

212

The tunnel is joined by a number of side passages, You throw yourself through the closing gap and but you follow Damontir's footprints steadily north just manage to scramble out of the way as the slab and finally emerge into another chamber. Turn to comes down on the stone floor with a dull crunch.

145.

You get up and brush the dust from your tunic and armour. You can only stare at the heavy slab that **209**

now blocks the corridor - a fraction slower and you You stop short and your hand goes to your sword would have been entombed behind it, or crushed as two natives step out on to the path ahead of under it. The priests of Katak jealously guarded you. Grotesque tattoos cover their faces and their their shrine with numerous fiendish traps. This teeth are filed to gleaming points. You back away will certainly not have been the last of them, and and start to turn - there is a third native behind you must remain alert. Turning the corner, you you. Your sword blade flashes in the afternoon proceed west until you enter another corridor.

must act quickly now, before the Dragon has a Damontir has left his footprints in the dust here.

chance to breathe again. Will you fight it with your You follow them northwards into a large chamber.

Did you succumb to the priest-kings' curse? If sword (turn to **182**), or will you use one of the so, turn to **279**. If not, turn to **145**.

items you have collected (turn to **148**)?

216

213

Your final spear-thrust pierces the Sentry's heart You head west and finally emerge into a room with and he sinks to the floor as his blood washes over small dark niches high up in the walls. A stark the ancient stones. You may keep the spear if you white skull rests in each. There is a marble pedestal wish - note it down on your Character Sheet if so.

at one end of the room. Stylized flames are carved You look around the ruins for ways down into the around its base and a large red gem lies on the floor pyramid. One seems almost too obvious - a heavy beside it. If you wish to pick up the gem, turn to flagstone with a metal ring in the middle, set into **62**. If you wish to cross the room and leave by the the stone floor. You can see from the dirt and moss passage in the opposite wall, turn to **53**.

caking the fine cracks around it that the flagstone has not been lifted up for years, perhaps centuries.

214

Damontir found some other route down.

You glance up as the sky rumbles. Thunder-You start to notice the stifling heat in the tunnel clouds are piling up like slate on the distant hori-when you are nearing the steps at the western end.

zon. As they slide in from the north, a mist of rain Your breathing is shallow and laborious - you hides the far-off mountain peaks. The storm ad-cannot seem to draw any air into your lungs. Will vances swiftly, and the first drops of rain are you turn back (turn to **123**), or hurry along to the already spattering the basalt steps as you return to steps at the end (turn to **230**)?

the problem of how you are going to enter the pyramid. If you wish to lift the flagstone and **215**

descend that way, turn to **36**. If you intend to search for another entrance, turn to **180**.

Glancing around for a nearby rock to leap to, you delay a moment too long. The world disappears in **217**

an incandescent white blaze as the Dragon's fiery breath engulfs you. Lose 12 VIGOUR points. If you You finally reach a corridor running north-south.

survive this, the flame subsides and you frantically Will you go north (turn to **210**) or south (turn to brush at your tunic where it has caught alight. You **24**)?

218

You find yourself in a plain, rubble-strewn gallery which you have entered at the northern end. You notice another door nearby, but decide to head south. As you do so, a massive figure which in the gloom you mistook for a statue stirs and lumbers across the room. It is a great Golem with a body of unyielding slate. Although surprised, you continue to beat the drum. Your Cadavers stalk forward and fall upon the Golem with ghastly voice-less battle-cries. They are lithe, and press their attack with unthinking savagery, inexorably chipping away at the Golem with their jagged weapons. But the stony creature retaliates by flailing its great arms about, and at each blow that connects you hear the snap of ancient bones. If you wish, you may cast down the drum and head south along the gallery (turn to **72**). If you would rather stay and see the outcome of the fight, turn to **198**.

219

A jewelled barge glides from one of the dark arches around the walls and drifts towards you trailing a slowly undulating wake. A robed figure stands like a tall orange flame in the prow. As the barge draws near, the figure's cowl falls back from its face and your sword-light gleams on lustrous metal. It is a gold-plated Skeleton, holding out its hand to receive some gift or payment. You know well what it requires from you. You drop the black pearl into

its latticed palm and step down into the barge.

and lift him up on to your shoulder before leaving Propelled by some sorcerous means, the vessel the room and heading north. Turn to **277**.

slowly turns and you are conveyed eerily across to the pyramid steps. Turn to **270**.

222

Katak's own glyph is the logical choice, since this is **220**

his temple. As your finger traces the weathered You race along the tunnel for only a short distance grooves, there is a groan of chains and gears from and then skid to a halt. It is a dead end. The below and then the circular dais on which you are Phoenix, knowing this, has given chase. You turn standing begins to descend into the pyramid.

to find it almost upon you.

Minki leaps hastily to join you as the dais drops away, and the two of you are conveyed down into PHOENIX

VIGOUR 12

darkness . . . Turn to **154**.

Roll two dice:

score 2 to 6 You are hit; lose 3 VIGOUR

223

score 7 to 12 The Phoenix loses 3 VIGOUR

Shortly after turning to the right, the corridor ends at a junction. Seeing that Damontir's footprints You cannot get past it to FLEE - this battle is to the head west from here, you decide to follow them.

death. If you win, turn to **187**.

Turn to **12**.

221

224

The mouldering threads of the tapestry rot and Writhing white flames form an impassable barrier shred away like cobwebs at your touch, leaving all around. Ahead of you, Damontir stands alone you staring straight into the eyes of a grim-faced amid the empty robes of the remaining Nightmare warrior with a glowing sword. You jump back Guard. They died battling a massive six-limbed startled, but it is only your own reflection in a huge monster of jade and steel that now lies broken and mirror. You find it odd that the shimmering sur-still. It must have guarded this cavern through face of the mirror has not deteriorated in so many aeons, the last guardian of the sacred idol. Its battle years. Perhaps the priests of Katak placed some against the Nightmare Guard has been fearsome preservative enchantments upon it. You laugh as and closely matched. Even Damontir, who is you notice Minki glowering at his own reflection usually one to hold back from personal danger, is

cut and bloodied. You stare at him with seething Illuminated by the unearthly half-light of its mirror hatred as you approach. His cloak hangs about world, it does not quite seem to be your twin.

him, giving him the appearance of a foul, white-Rather, it looks like a vivid portrait of yourself plumed scavenger bird as he pours over the rendered in unnatural hues.

ancient runes carved on a granite podium.

This is your Simulacrum,' explains Damontir. 'A He notices you and turns, saying, 'Ah! You got soulless duplicate of yourself.' The Simulacrum past Sulsa Doom, then. I had a feeling you might.'

utters an unreal cry and advances on you with a He gestures at the inscribed podium. 'There is look of wild malice. 'It is an unreasoning auto-some complex formula for lowering the flames that maton, quite dedicated to its single purpose. Kill-surround us. The idol lies beyond them, naturally.

ing you.'

I should be able to decipher the runes quite Contemptuously, Damontir turns away from the quickly, though I daresay you would have no more fight and resumes his translation of the runes on comprehension of such things than the annoying the podium. The Simulacrum has the same little monkey I slew earlier.'

VIGOUR as you have at the moment. It is like you You search for phrases to curse this obscenely in every respect, except that it has neither soul nor smirking villain, but can think of none. 'Damontir,'

intellect, and does not cast a shadow. You prepare you say flatly. 'You will die by my sword.'

yourself for battle.

He looks at you sharply, then laughs without Turn to **43**.

mirth. 'Dragon Knight of Palados! Were we to **225**

cross blades, perhaps you might be the victor. But I have a dozen sorcerous ways to kill you before you As you drink from the chalice, it automatically reach me.' He draws something from his tunic.

casts a healing spell upon you. Increase your Light flashes across your face as he turns it towards *current* VIGOUR by 6 points - unless this would you. 'The Mirror of the Moon.'

take your VIGOUR above its *normal* score, in which Damontir carefully angles the mirror to reflect case any excess points are lost. This healing spell your own gaze back at you and then releases it.

draws on your own innate psychic reserves -

Instead of falling to shatter on the hard stone floor, reduce your PSI by 1 point for the time being. You it floats in mid-air. It starts slowly to rotate, grow-may keep the chalice and use it anytime as long as ing larger as it does so until it seems a swirling pool you have water to pour into it. Each

time you drink of quicksilver filled by your image. Then, as you you will gain 6 VIGOUR points and lose 1 PSI stare in stunned incredulity, your own reflection point; you may do this at any point in your steps out of the mirror and stands before you.

adventure except when you are in combat. You

must not use it if that would reduce your PSI score claw feebly at it. Someone stands over you, a red below 2, however. After putting the chalice into shadow against the dazzling sun, and then you your backpack you head west out of the room.

pass out. You will never awaken.

Turn to **87**.

226

229

Sparks of magical radiance jump from the Twenty centuries ago, the vapour was a volatile Revenant's hands towards you. As they sink into toxin that would kill a victim in seconds. You are your flesh you feel a bitter chill as though you had indeed fortunate that it has oxidized and degener-been buried in a snowdrift. Roll two dice. If the ated over the years. It is now no more than a mild score is less than or equal to your current PSI, turn irritant that causes your eyes to water. As the cloud to **278**. If greater, turn to **183**.

of vapour disperses, you see three items inside the open casket - a bronze ring, a bottle of blue liquid **227**

and a belt adorned with polished stones. If you wish to leave these where they are, turn to **240**. If You plunge like an arrow through the rolling mist.

you wish to take any of the items, which will you A break in the cloud shows you water at the remove from the casket first:

bottom of the shaft - but your relief soon changes to a nausea of fear when you see how the surface of The belt?

Turn to **174**

the water bubbles and seethes. You are diving The ring?

Turn to **45**

towards a simmering underground lake that must The bottle?

Turn to **6**

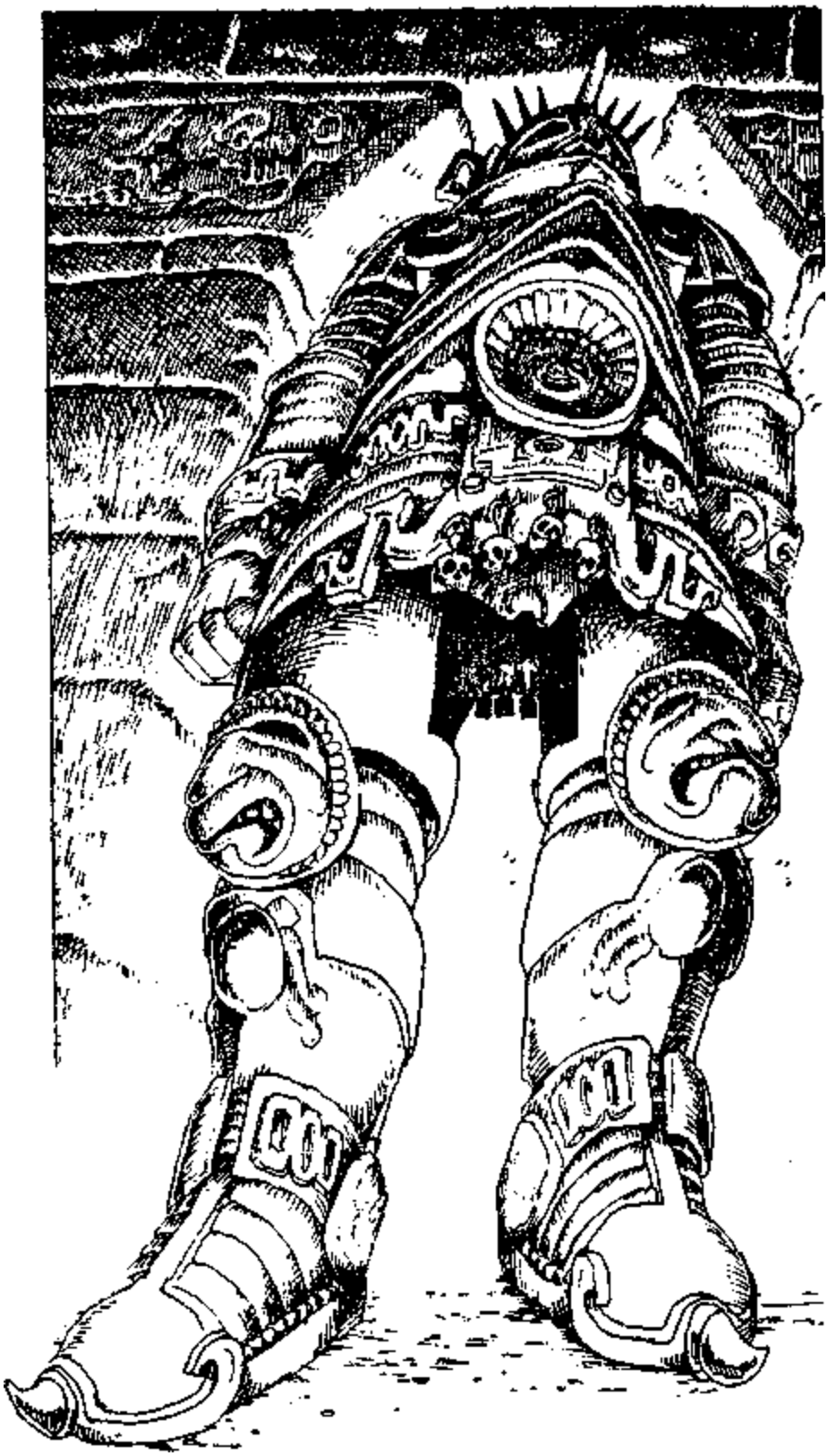
be close to boiling point! Are you wearing a cloak of feathers? If so, turn to **203**. If you have not **230**

picked up this item on your quest, turn to **112**.

You ascend the short flight of steps into a large **228**

hexagonal room. The air here, although stale and musty, is at least breathable. Feeling slightly faint, One of the quarrels punctures your lung. You you kneel down beside the steps to get your breath crash to the dusty ground. Shouts and disjointed back. Scanning the room at leisure, you are most images swirl about you. Minki is tugging at your interested in a large suit of bronze armour that cloak with his tiny paws. You are aware of the taste stands in an alcove on the other side of the room.

of blood and the dry earth in your mouth. A As you look at the overlapping plates of burnished booted foot turns you over on your back and you metal, engraved with mysterious sigils, you realize



that it could not have been fashioned for any human warrior. The whole suit must weigh almost half a tonne! This thought makes you uneasy, and you quickly get to your feet. In the wall close by you there is a circular bronze plug with the sacred flame-glyph of Katak embossed upon it. The wall around the plug is livid and scarred, like fused brimstone. If you wish to try removing the plug from the wall, turn to **158**. If you would rather walk back along the tunnel to the main corridor and head south, turn to **194**.

231

Do you have a Ring of Intangibility? If so, turn to 162. If not, you must try to dodge the dragon's breath - try to roll equal to or less than your *current* AGILITY on two dice. If you succeed, turn to **94**. If you fail, turn to **215**.

232

You step up to another of the mummies and shred away the gold leaf to expose another gauntly grinning face. This one, however, holds a black pearl between its yellowed teeth. Damontir obviously felt it worthwhile to take some of these pearls from the corpses of the priest-kings. You reach out and seize the pearl, pulling it from the mummy's jaws with some effort. As you turn to continue on your way, a sense of stark malevo-lence looms in upon you like a demon's shadow. It is the curse of the priest-kings, an ancient hex that

assails all who desecrate their engilded bodies. In **234**

the twenty centuries that have passed since it was laid, however, the curse had lost much of its The priests of Katak created the undead Skull-potency. You need only roll your current PSI or ghasts to protect their temple from intruders. Hav-less on *one* die to resist it. If you succeed, turn to ing only rudimentary intelligence, the Skullghast **33**. If you fail, turn to **38**.

assumes from the pectoral you wear that you are a noble of the Anku Empire and therefore entitled to walk in the sacred precincts. It hovers before you **233**

for a few moments and then settles down on to the You point at the jars inside the hut and motion for pedestal once more. Slightly unnerved by your the two nearest warriors to fetch them. Sullenly, narrow escape, you back slowly out of the room they bring the heavy jars outside. Peering within, and try the other door. Turn to **150**.

you find a frothy brew of fermenting juices. This concoction is prepared for ritual use - normally the **235**

natives would drink it only at certain sacred festiv-You hurtle through the door and slam it shut als, but they break with tradition in view of their behind you. Finding yourself in another corridor, Witchdoctor's plight. Still glowering at you, they you decide to head west. Turn to **89**.

gulp back the brew in huge quantities and are soon lolling on the ground, helplessly drunk. The Witchdoctor himself cantankerously refuses to **236**

touch the brew. You do not wish to hurt the old With Minki perched on your shoulder, you walk fellow, so you take away his bone wand and across to the gallery. You hold your sword up to medicine pouch to prevent him casting any spells drive back the gossamer shadows. In the gloom and then tie him up. He watches you in silence, beyond the pillars you can dimly make out a line of resenting the ignominious treatment but aware statues along the gallery, so badly cracked and that you are an honourable foe. If you decide to worn that they look like victims of leprosy. Some-keep his wand and pouch, remember to note them thing gleams dully in the magical light. You stoop on your Character Sheet. As you turn to leave, you and pick up a small jadeite figurine in the shape of are pleased to find Minki waiting for you by the a plummeting eagle. Note this item down on your side of the clearing. By the time the dozing natives Character Sheet if you decide to keep it. You turn sober up, the pair of you will be long gone. You away from the gallery and head west once more.

head off into the jungle. Turn to **80**.

Turn to **217**.

237

240

Even as your first adversary falls in a shower of You jump over the deep pit, swing your pack over chipped rock, the second slithers inexorably for-your shoulder and head west out of the room.

ward.

Turn to **69**.

Second STONE SERPENT

VIGOUR 12

241

Roll two dice:

As the greatest knight of Palados, you should have score 2 to 5 You are wounded and lose 3

little trouble with two scruffy thugs like these!

VIGOUR

score 6 to 12 The Serpent loses 3 VIGOUR

FIRST SENTRY VIGOUR 9

SECOND SENTRY VIGOUR 9

If you win, turn to **71**.

Roll two dice:

238

score 2 to 3 You are hit twice - lose 6 VIGOUR

score 4 to 5 You are hit once - lose 3 VIGOUR

You are now gasping for breath, and it is all you score 6 to 12 One of the Sentries (you choose can do to wield your sword with aching arms as which) loses 3 VIGOUR

you watch your last opponent stalk towards you.

When you have put one of them down, turn to **113.**

Roll two dice:

score 2 to 5 You lose 3 VIGOUR

242

score 6 to 12 The Cadaver loses 3 VIGOUR

You circle warily as Damontir stalks closer, taunt-If you FLEE south, turn to **15**. If you defeat the ing you all the while by waving his deadly ring as Cadaver, turn to **54**.

though it were the merest bauble. You feel stone behind you - you see that you have backed into the **239**

wall next to the alcove. The eternally fierce visage How many times did the Scorpion sting you? You of the idol looks out sightlessly across the cavern.

must roll higher than this number on one die in Damontir's ring glows angrily.

order to shrug off the effects of its venom. Roll the There is nowhere left to run,' he says.

die, and if the number you roll exceeds the number

'Goodbye.'

of times you were stung, turn to **297**. If not, turn to The ruby beam shoots from the ring - and fizzles **99**.

out in mid-air, inches from your face! Damontir

could not be any more astonished than you are. A Revenant as it rips its jewelled pectoral from your host of feelings show on his thin face - surprise, chest.

disbelief, thwarted rage. Fear.

Damontir gapes at the idol and then at your broadsword, which you notice shines less brightly **244**

now. You have the answer, as he does - the idol Perhaps some supernatural influence guides you must in some way suppress magic within a limited to raise the trumpet to your lips and blow. It radius. But you cannot stay within the safety of produces a deep, low note which builds to a this zone. You must rush the insane warlock while thunderous rumble. You stop blowing, but the he is still bewildered. With sword raised high you noise continues to grow. Suddenly the conch shell leap towards him. He stares at you in stark terror bursts asunder and, as it does so, you hear the and raises a shaking hand. He has time for one shriek of a violent gale. Though you feel no wind shot before you close. To dodge this you must roll yourself, you behold its effects - the smoke cloud is equal to or less than your current AGILITY on *three* thrust back as if a giant invisible hand had swept dice - if you fail, you lose 15 VIGOUR points.

through it. The wind soon drops, but by the time it (Alternatively, if you have a Ring of Intangibility, does there are only a few faint wisps of smoke left you can activate it and allow the flame-bolt to pass in the air. The trumpet was an item consecrated to harmlessly through you. The ring will crumble the Anku thunder-god Tlal. When you sounded it, after use).

you brought its sacred power against the malevo-If you survive the shot then you reach Damontir.

lent Smoke Wraiths which might otherwise have Turn to **30**.

claimed your soul. Once the smoke has completely dispersed, you continue down the stairs. Turn to **243**

100.

In the days of the Anku Empire, the scions of the nobility customarily entered the priesthood and learned the art of magic. The Revenant you are **245**

fighting was obviously an adept pupil, for its touch You fall down a shaft which runs right down carries a spell that causes motes of green light to through the silver pyramid and opens into a cavern erupt from your body. You try to fend it away, but below it. It is difficult to see clearly within the

the darting green lights are numbing your limbs dazzling column of light and, although you are and poisoning your blood. As your vision fades, braced for your impact with the floor, you still land the last thing you see is the twisted grin of the awkwardly. Reduce your *current* AGILITY by 2

points. If your AGILITY is now zero, turn to **168**.

eyes flicker like windows on the starry night. You Otherwise turn to **224**.

can discern no other feature of the hooded faces.

You know that if you tried to escape they would **246**

cut you down before you had gone three paces. It is a fight to the death - yours or theirs.

You press onwards, feeling very much alone until your spirits are lifted by the sight of an old friend First NIGHTMARE GUARD VIGOUR 12

swinging through the trees towards you. Minki Second NIGHTMARE GUARD VIGOUR 12

gambols and frolics around you, beside himself *Roll two dice:*

with joy at finding you alive. Turn to **80**.

score 2 to 4 You are hit by both; lose 6

VIGOUR

247

score 5 to 7 You are hit by one of them; lose 3

As the smoke disperses, so do you. The Smoke VIGOUR

Wraiths have claimed you as their own, and you score 8 to 12 One of the Nightmare Guards are a part of their shadow world now.

(you choose which) loses 3

VIGOUR

248

If you kill one of them, turn to **285**.

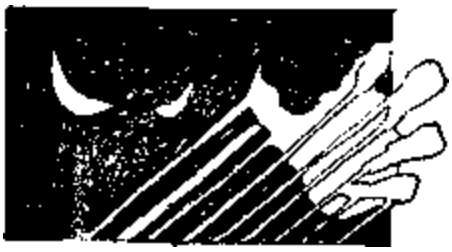
You hurl it away from you and the gem splinters against the marble wall. Your lack of caution was **250**

very dangerous. The pendant was almost certainly In the hope of finding a more direct - and less a magical trap left by Damontir in case you sur- potentially hazardous - route into the heart of the vived to pursue him. He would have had one of his temple, you retrace your steps. You ascend into Nightmare Guard place it on the slab, of course -

the ruined building atop the pyramid to find that that was why there were no footprints across the the storm has broken overhead. Warm rain falls in dusty floor. Resolving to be on your guard from a staggering deluge and as you look out across the now on, you return to the corridor and head west jungle treetops, you find the writhing expanse of once more. Turn to **269**.

green reminiscent of a storm-churned sea. For a moment your thoughts dwell upon your ship and **249**

the sailors aboard her. Is your peril in this haunted The black-garbed assassins creep silently towards place any greater than theirs, out there on the you. Beneath their veils of grey silk, their crescent seething river with lightning dropping splinters of



light into the semi-darkness? As rain lashes the unimpressed. Uttering a growl of smoke and flick-weathered stone, you begin to search for another

ering fire, it lashes out with scything talons and way down into the pyramid. Turn to **180**.

rakes the sceptre from your grasp. Lose 4 VIGOUR

and, if you are still alive, ready your, sword and **251**

prepare to do battle! Turn to **182**.

You have gone only a few paces into the hall when **253**

you think you hear a faint noise behind you.

Looking back, you can see nothing in the blackness You follow the faint track as it twists and turns of the corridor along which you have just come.

between the thick, iron-hard tree trunks. Even-Though anxious to press on, you make your way tually you pause and wipe your brow. You are just back to the mouth of the corridor. Blue sword-light about to take a brief rest and share a little water rends the velvet dark. A green-tinted skeleton with Minki when you catch sight of something that stands before you, spotted with wet grass and makes your blood run cold despite the fierce tropi- grave-mould. Suddenly it screams - a shrill cal heat. A fleshless skull grins out at you from unearthly sound - and lunges at your throat with behind the hanging fronds. There are many more, its splintered fingers. The Anku nobleman whose set all around the path atop wooden poles. Do you grave you rifled has risen from the dead to pursue wish to go back and take the other branch of the you.

trail? If so, turn to **95**. If you decide to ignore the REVENANT VIGOUR 9

grisly warning and press on regardless, turn to **51**.

Roll two dice:

score 2 to 3 Turn to **226**

score 4 to 6 You are wounded; lose 3 VIGOUR

score 7 to 12 The Revenant loses 3 VIGOUR

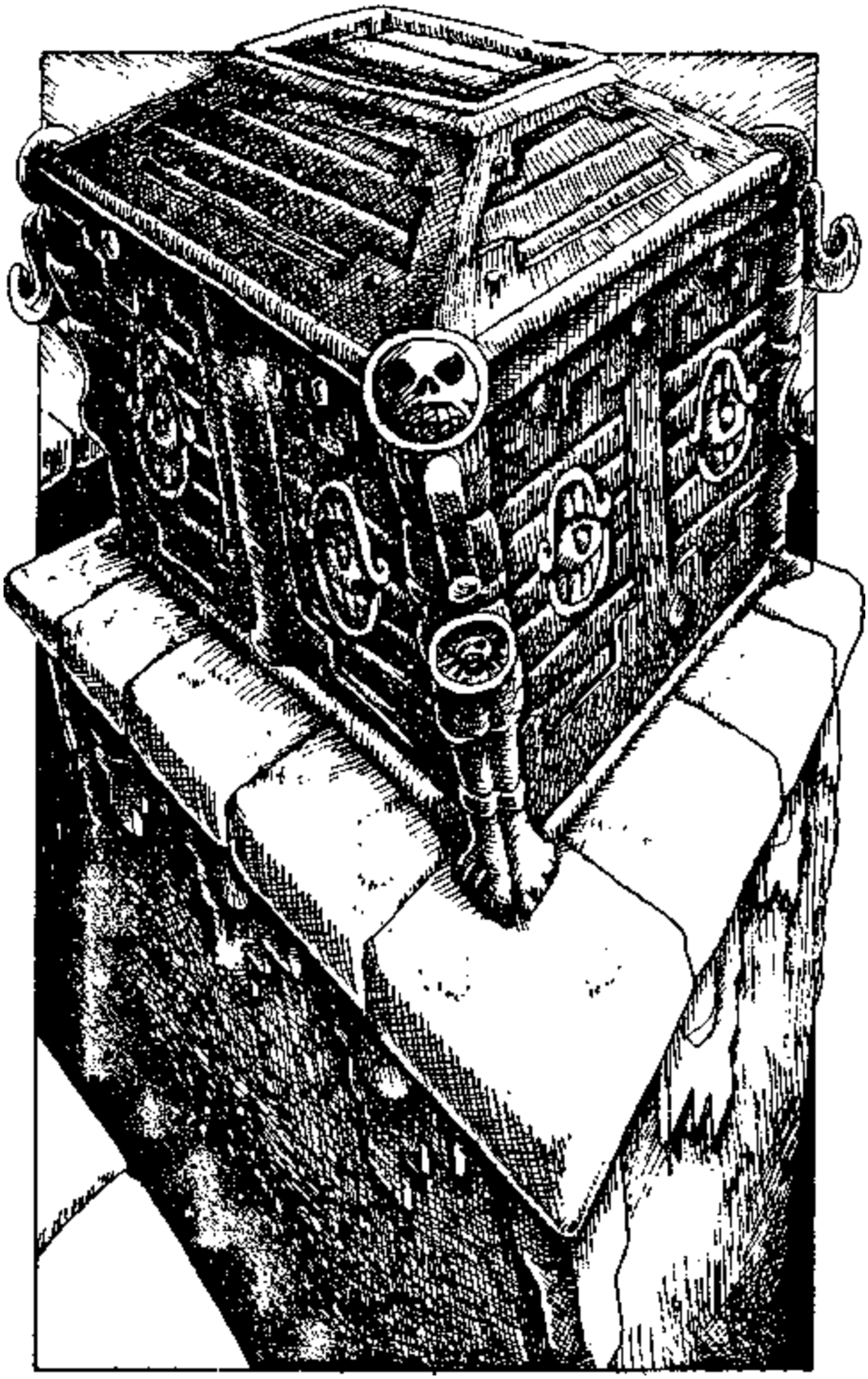
You must not FLEE from this battle - unless you destroy the Revenant now, it will hunt you for-254

evermore. If you win, turn to **110**.

The Skullghasts surge closer as you take out the gem. This is the item they are fighting to protect.

252

Damontir must have removed it from the pedestal You pull the sceptre from your belt and brandish it when he passed this way ahead of you. You drop before the Dragon - which is, however, wholly the gem to the floor, just as your arch enemy



obviously did, and the Skullghasts immediately veer away and return to their niches in the wall.

With a last look at the sparkling gem, you fetch Minki and continue on your way. Turn to **53**.

255

If the wand is truly imbued with any magical properties, you have no idea how to call them forth. Certainly it has no effect on the undead warriors as they advance towards you. Turn to **41**.

256

The cold steel of your enchanted blade overcomes the Malgash at last. Its flame dies with it, and it disintegrates into black smouldering ashes. You waste no more time here, but turn away from the scene of this titanic battle while soot still hangs in the air. Beyond the north door you find a passage which you decide to follow westwards. Turn to **89**.

257

There is a large rectangular pit at the southern extremity of the room. On a plinth in the middle of the pit, level with the floor of the room, rests a large casket of black wood. There is barely more than a metre and a half between the edge of the pit and the plinth. You could jump across quite easily, although you find it discomforting that the light from your sword does not reach far enough to show you the bottom of the pit. If you wish to leap on to the plinth, turn to **103**. If you would rather

leave the room through the archway in the west hovers over the black visor of his helmet. Then, wall, turn to **69**.

despite your curiosity, you stand back from the body. Better not to gaze upon his death-ravaged **258**

face. You roll the body off the walkway and watch the clouds of steam swallow it. After a few Although you have slain one of their number, the seconds, a muffled splash drifts up from the remaining natives attack with renewed ferocity.

depths. Your thoughts dwell on poor Minki, who *Roll two dice:*

in a space of hours you had come to regard as a score 2 to 3 You are hit twice - lose 6 VIGOUR

friend and boon companion. Victory over the score 4 to 5 You are hit once - lose 3 VIGOUR

undead Sulsa Doom has not slaked your thirst for score 6 to 12 One of the Natives (your choice) vengeance. Damontir himself must pay with his loses 3 VIGOUR

lifeblood. There is a grim cast to your features and your eyes are like chips of ice as you cross to the far If you kill a second native, turn to **165**.

side of the shaft and pass through the black archway beyond. Turn to **295**.

259

As you stroke your fingertips along the weathered **261**

lines of the glyph, there is a sudden shriek of metal You try rubbing the paste into your skin. It is oily gears from under your feet, and then the circular and rapidly absorbed. As it takes effect, you see dais on which you are standing shoots up like a any wounds you have received beginning to heal piston and slams into the basalt ceiling. Slowly the miraculously - restore 10 VIGOUR points (up to ingenious mechanism resets itself, lowering the the maximum limit of your *normal* VIGOUR score).

dais back to its original position. Minki runs You must now try one of the other substances -

around the monolith, whining for his lost friend.

either the powder (turn to **90**) or the liquid (turn to All that remains of you now is a smear of pulve-121).

rized bone and mashed sinew. You have failed in your quest to find the lost idol of Katak.

262

260

You hit the floor with a bone-jarring impact, but at least you are still alive. There is a thunderous crack Doom sinks down with a ghastly cry as his sha- and a burst of heat like an open furnace as the dow-life slips from him. For a moment your hand energy blast shoots over your head. The fraying

tapestry shrivels away to expose the mirror beneath, and the full force of the bolt is reflected directly back at the creature itself! Its dying shriek goes on for a long time; you cover your ears to keep out the terrible noise.

When you look up, there is nothing left of your strange adversary apart from a charred and head-less husk. The stench in the room is appalling, and you waste no time in staggering back into the next chamber. Minki pads quietly along beside you, perhaps sensing your shock at this brush with death. Turn to **79**.

263

The steps descend only a few metres into a low tunnel. You can barely discern another set of steps in the shadows at the far end, this time leading up.

As you walk along the tunnel, you pass a succession of sculpted faces that peer out from the walls.

Even by the standards of Anku art they strike you as unnecessarily daunting, with features contorted into expressions of rage and terror, agony and wild delight. Each face has a gaping black maw -

perhaps opening into deep recesses in the walls. If you wish to stop and investigate the carved faces more closely, turn to **147**. If you would rather carry straight on along the tunnel, turn to **214.**

264

You remember that the ruby dust bled from the Stone Serpents you fought. Perhaps it has magical

With Minki at your heels, you follow the passage properties. Your hunch is confirmed as soon as west until you enter a large room where savage you cast the glittering dust out on to the steaming carvings merge with the walls and pillars. Turn to water. A sheet of translucent crystal, like hard **257**.

crimson ice, forms rapidly. As the Dragon surges through this, the crystal spreads up around its body. A sparkling shell encases the Dragon and its **267**

struggles grow slower and more feeble as the shell As you go on, the trees around you become less hardens. At last it stops moving altogether, frozen closely spaced and the ferns and bushes grow forever in sinuous grace like a sculpture of solid thicker and more luxuriant. Humming-birds whir ruby. You make your way past it along the line of and dart all around you, plundering nectar from rocks and leave the shaft through the arch in the the exotic flowers. Before long the path forks north wall. Turn to **156**.

again, and you may go left (turn to **173**) or right **265**

(turn to **44**).

Even in its damaged state, the Golem is a powerful creature and will be hard to beat.

268

GOLEM

VIGOUR 9

As the first Cadaver falls you see a chance to FLEE

down the passage in the south wall. You may do so *Roll two dice:*

if you wish - but all three of the remaining Cadav-score 2 to 6 You are hit; lose 4 VIGOUR

ers will try to strike you as you FLEE, and you score 7 to 12 The Golem loses 3 VIGOUR

must make your AGILITY roll to avoid each. If you If you win, turn to **14**. If you FLEE south along the FLEE, turn to **15**. If not, the Cadavers soon dose gallery, turn to **72**.

the gap in their ranks and you must battle on.

(illustration on previous page) Roll two dice:

266

score 2

You lose 9 VIGOUR

score 3 to 4

You lose 6 VIGOUR

The grille crashes to the dusty floor of the passage.

score 5 to 7

You lose 3 VIGOUR

You step through. As in the other passage, bas-score 8 to 12 One of the Cadavers loses 3

reliefs form a warlike procession along the walls.

VIGOUR

The air is stale and dry, and you moisten your lips with a little water from your flask before going on.

If you defeat another, turn to **98**.

269

you leave the cage door open and continue on your way. Turn to **209**.

In the north wall of the corridor there is a side tunnel, at the end of which you can see a charred **272**

timber door. If you wish to walk down the tunnel and open the door, turn to **56**. If you would rather The passage brings you to a large, high-ceilinged

continue west, turn to **223**.

chamber. A torn silk robe lies at the entrance by your feet, seeming like a pool of black ink on the marble floor. When you stir it with the point of **270**

your sword a fine grey ash spills out. This tells you With energetic strides you mount the steps to the that it is the remains of one of Damontir's Night-top of the pyramid. It is rather less tiring to ascend mare Guard - silent, demonic assassins that crum-this smaller replica than it was to climb the full size ble to dust when they are slain. Your enemy took version far above you! As you reach the top, you this route into the temple labyrinth, then. Minki see a circular pit in the summit. Suddenly a column hesitantly paws at a second, similar robe. You of crimson light flares into life, descending from discover what killed them as you pass along to the the high ceiling of the chamber down into the pit -

far end of the chamber. Lying against the wall is and thence into the silver pyramid's heart. The the carcass of a huge clawed Manticore - doubtless only way on is to step into the beam of light. . .

a guardian of the pyramid since time immemorial.

You sheathe your sword, "take a deep breath, The blood which flows from its many wounds is and step off into space.

still sticky, still warm. Damontir and his retinue Turn to **176**.

cannot be very far ahead of you. Cautiously you press on deeper into the labyrinth. Turn to **122**.

271

273

The girl watches you with wild, scared eyes as you cut through the rope securing the cage and lower it Which item will you produce from your backpack: gently to the ground. A single stroke of your knife A gilded sceptre? Turn to **58**

chops through the twine holding the cage door A witchdoctor's wand? Turn to **32**

shut. She shrinks back and whimpers as you untie A red gem? Turn to **254**

the silver wire, unable to understand your sooth-ing words of reassurance. She cowers in a corner of If you do not think any of these will be of use, you the cage and makes no move towards freedom, so must rely on your fighting skill (turn to **126**).

274

Damontir left two of his Nightmare Guard to ambush you. They prowl silently towards you from the darkness beyond the double doors. One holds a long bright icicle of a blade, the other's dagger is shorter and hooked like a vulture's beak.

There is no room for you to dodge past them. If you are to pursue Damontir, you must first slay these shadowy assassins.

First NIGHTMARE GUARD VIGOUR 12

Second NIGHTMARE GUARD VIGOUR 12

Roll two dice:

score 2 to 4

You are hit twice; lose 6 VIGOUR

score 5 to 7

You are hit once; lose 3 VIGOUR

score 8 to 12 One of the Nightmare Guards (you decide which) loses 3

VIGOUR

If you kill one of them, turn to **65**.

275

Even through the thick soles of your boots you can feel how hot the rocks are. As you cross them, you happen to dislodge a few loose pebbles which fall into the lake. You have not gone much further when the water nearby begins to churn and froth.

There is an odd stinging odour as large murky bubbles break the surface. Suddenly a huge spout of water erupts into the air. As the fine, hot spray splashes all around you, you think at first that you

are witnessing an underground geyser. But then You look around. To your horror, your little com-you see something else - something red and panion is dead - a pool of blood is spreading from gleaming rising up from the water. Two gold-his twitching form. You start to rise, hand reaching flecked eyes regard you with a look of reptilian for your sword, only to fall as an agonizing pain spite. You stand in awe as the massive Red Dragon shoots up your leg. You think at first that a snake rears up and shakes the water from its burnished has attacked you, but when you see the thing scales. Its wings span half the shaft. It watches you clinging to your leg you know that the truth is for a heart-stopping moment, steam hissing from infinitely more terrible. It is a shrunken head. More its flared nostrils, then throws back its head and of the grisly creatures drop from the branches to spreads wide its wings in a mighty intake of sink their envenomed teeth into your flesh. Even breath. Turn to **231**.

from beyond the grave, the Witchdoctor's spirit has guided these emissaries of retribution. You scream and scream, but to no avail. The shrunken **276**

heads feast, and in hours only your bones will You roll the Witchdoctor's body into the bushes remain.

and wipe his blood from your sword before press-ing onwards. You are in low spirits, shamed by the **277**

murder you have committed. Minki rejoins you after a while, but he sterns to sense your gloom The room beyond the antechamber is large and and slopes along at your heels with none of his high-ceilinged. In the light of your magic sword former jollity. You wonder if the natives have you can just see a passage leading west out of the found the Witchdoctor's corpse yet. You can hear room. As you make your way over to this, you their groans and howls close behind you now, a pass a line of pillars engraved with the stylized score of voices joined in a threnody of vengeance.

flame symbols of the god Katak. A massive block of Realizing that you cannot outdistance them, you polished red granite against the far wall may once hastily camouflage yourself in a dense thicket. The have been an altar stone where heretics and pris-natives run straight past your hiding place without oners of war would have met a grisly death. You spotting you. You listen to their warcries fading are considering a detour to inspect the altar more into the distance and you are confident that you closely, in case some magical relic is hidden inside have shaken them off. Just as you are about to it, when a figure steps from the shadows to face disentangle yourself from the thicket and go on you. It stands upon two legs, but it is not human.

your way, Minki suddenly utters a strangled cry.

Its skin is dark and thorny, it has cruel talons on

two short reptilian limbs where its arms should be, **279**

and its 'head' comprises a single glowing orb of an The curse at last takes its delayed toll. You stagger eye on the end of a long stalk. You are dumb-as a dozen old wounds and battle scars reopen and struck, bewildered; it is like no creature you have bright blood drips down on to the floor around ever encountered. This hesitation almost costs you your feet. Roll two dice and add 3 to the total - this your life. As you falter, the creature discharges a is how many VIGOUR points you lose before you searing beam of ruby light from its eye. At the can staunch the bleeding. If you are still alive, turn same instant Minki leaps down from your shoul-to **145**.

der, and this distracts the creature so that its energy blast goes slightly wide. Instead of hitting **280**

you it strikes the wall behind, vaporizing an The native warriors snarl and posture threaten-ancient mural and causing the stone to blister and ingly, but they realize that any attempt to rush you boil. The release of energy temporarily depletes the would cost their Witchdoctor his life. They feign creature. Its eye burns a dull red now, but you can blank incomprehension at first when you hold out see it growing brighter by the second as the crea- your free hand towards the man who carries your ture builds up for another shot. You could charge sword. You tighten your grip on the Witchdoctor's straight at it now, in the hope that you can reach it throat until his face is an awful shade of magenta, before it can fire another energy blast. If you wish and your sword is then hastily returned to you. As to try that, turn to **48**. If you wish to try and escape the Witchdoctor squirms and gurgles in your from it, turn to **27.**

grasp, you look into the faces of the natives and see the naked hate in their eyes. You have the upper **278**

hand for the moment, but how will you keep them Despite the fierce psychic strain, you manage to from coming after you when you leave the village?

throw off whatever spell the Revenant attempted You consider several plans. Will you: against you. It snaps its snaggle-toothed jaw in Set fire to their huts to keep

rage and closes to resume the battle.

them busy? Turn to **105**

Roll two dice:

Take the Witchdoctor with you

score 2 to 6 You are wounded and lose 3

as a hostage? Turn to **299**

VIGOUR

Force them all to get drunk on

score 7 to 12 The Revenant loses 3 VIGOUR

the brew in the Witchdoctor's

If you win, turn to **110**.

hut? Turn to **233**

281

You reach out your hand . . . (turn to **259**)...

282

It seems you cannot escape from the Malgash.

Well, if that is so, you will show this fell demon the harsh price of hindering you in your quest!

THE MALGASH VIGOUR 18 (unless you

have already fought it and have reduced its VIGOUR)

Roll two dice:

score 2 to 7 You lose 4 VIGOUR

score 8 to 12 The Malgash loses 3 VIGOUR; you lose 1 VIGOUR

If you win, turn to **256.**

283

You deal the death-blow and the Simulacrum sinks back into the trembling quicksilver surface. Your reflection is clouded out as the surface swims with murky colours like a soap film. It breaks into shimmering bright nodules which drift outwards and gradually fade from view. A small mirror lies broken on the floor. .

The battle has carried you back away from Damontir. As you turn to face him, he touches one of the runes on the podium and speaks a few guttural words in the extinct Anku tongue.

Immediately there is a soft hiss and the high wall of

flames that encloses you shrinks away. You stare **285**

in awe at the sheer immensity of the cavern, but Though one of your opponents falls, crumbling to the glint in Damontir's eyes is more purposefully dust like all of its kind when slain, the other fights directed. Following his gaze, you look behind you.

on with no thought of retreat or surrender.

In an alcove like a fanged maw stands the gleaming golden idol of the flame-god. More than two *Roll two dice:*

score 2 to 5 You are hit; lose 3 VIGOUR

thousand years have passed since any mortal last score 6 to 12 The Nightmare Guard loses 3

beheld it - last possessed it. The body is squat and VIGOUR

powerful, each rippling muscle sculpted to perfec-tion. The face shows the classical ideal of Anku If you win, you continue northwards. Turn to **108**.

nobility, though with the grotesque flourish of two serpentine tusks curving along the sharp high-286

boned cheeks. The eyes are huge faceted rubies.

The Revenant disintegrates and clatters in frag-You glance back to find Damontir watching you.

ments to the stone floor. Its bony hands are still His arm is raised towards you, and on his clinging to your tunic; it is only with considerable ungloved hand you see the Ring of Red Ruin. He effort that you break their grip and hurl them away was waiting for you to turn, so that you would see from you. You walk over to where Minki sits the look of gloating triumph. A tendril of crimson trembling. He whines and stares nervously into fire streaks towards your heart. You must be very the shadows, but will not move. Eventually you quick to dodge it. Roll *three* dice (or roll one die pick him up and continue west. Turn to **217**.

three times and add the scores together). If the total is less than or equal to your current AGILITY

287

turn to **204**. If it is greater, turn to **13**.

You try to evade the bolt but are too slow. Glowing plasma ignites your clothes, melts your armour **284**

and flesh, chars your naked bones. You are dead before you can draw breath to scream.

The effect of the curse manifests itself at last. A number of old wounds and battle scars suddenly **288**

open, spilling your blood on the refulgent floor.

Roll two dice and add 3 to the total - this is the Three passages lead off from the end of the candle-number of VIGOUR points you lose. If you are still lit hall. From here, will you go east (turn to **116**), alive, turn to **60**.

north (turn to **199**) or west (turn to **55**)?

289

your breathing is shallow and painful, and now you guess the reason why. From the mouths of the In your panic you have become disorientated. You graven faces seeps a heavy suffocating gas, in-cannot see that you are staggering away from the pool. You strike the wall and collapse in a writhing geniously channelled along volcanic vents deep in heap. Your screams die to whimpers, and then the rock. But if the atmosphere in the tunnel will only the echo of a whimper, as the inferno con-not sustain life, neither will it sustain the sumes you. Your quest has ended in failure and a Elemental. Its flame gutters and dies, and the horrible death.

armour falls in disjointed segments amid a clangor-ous noise like the pealing of a bronze bell. As you step back towards it, a wisp of smoke curls up from **290**

the visor and drifts down the tunnel. You watch it You pause at an archway in the north wall of the disperse and then hurry back to the room before corridor. A second corridor leads off beyond it.

the air in your lungs gives out. Turn to **135**.

Will you head north along the new corridor (turn to **22**), or continue west (turn to **50**)?

293

291

You head gradually west through a succession of dusty rooms and narrow tunnels until you reach a You manage to grab the newel and stop yourself corridor leading south. A short distance further on, from falling. As you blunder on downwards, the this joins a second corridor running east and west.

dire spectres loom once more out of the darkness.

You decide to take the western branch. Turn to Their faces are twisted in mad laughter now as **190**.

they try to rip the soul from your body. If you score less than or equal to your current PSI on the total of **294**

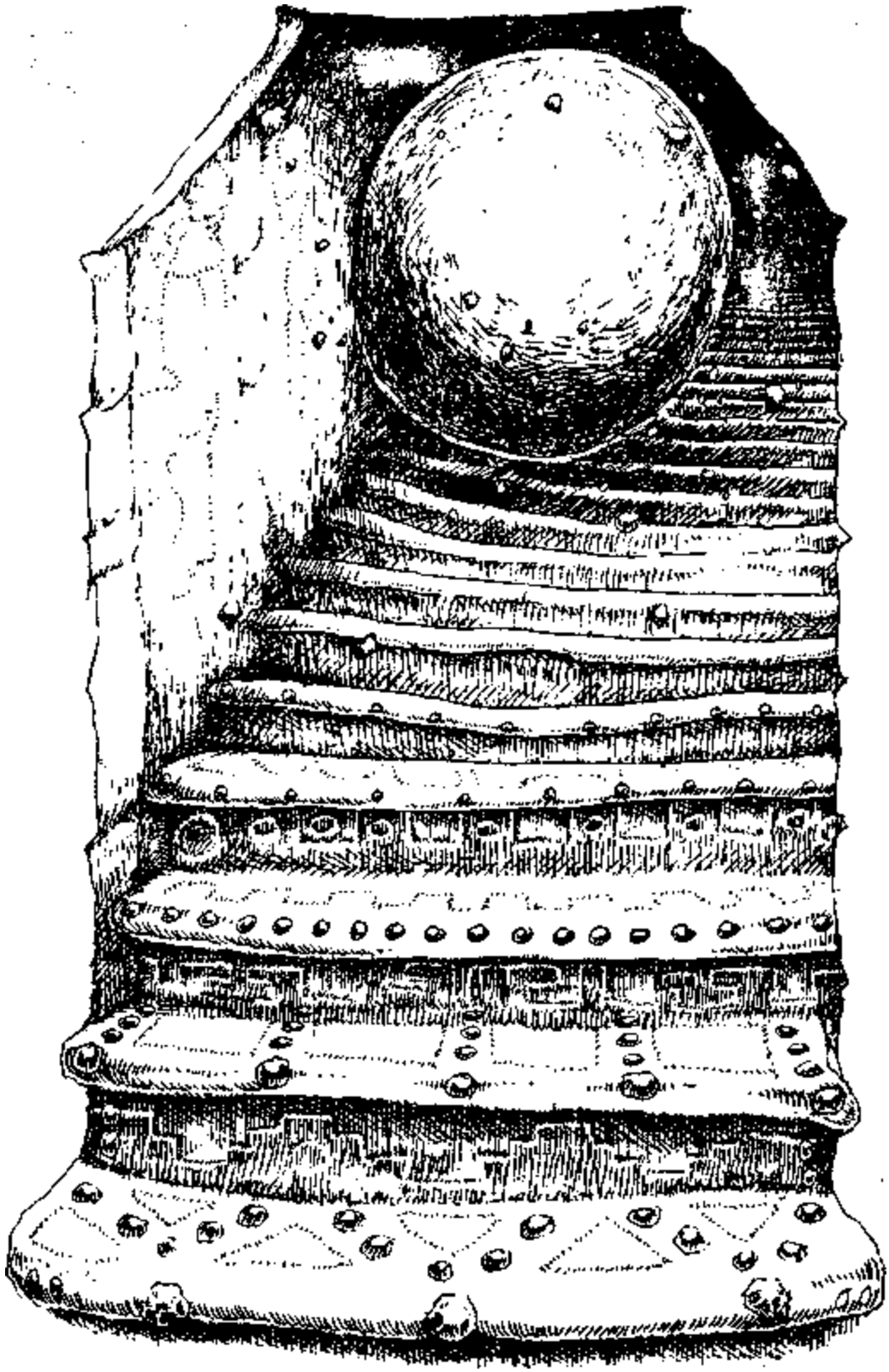
three dice, turn to **139**. If you score higher than your PSI, turn to **247**.

Will you now leave by the tunnel in the north wall (turn to **146**), or will you go back the way you came **292**

(turn to **213**)?

You scramble along the tunnel. Bronze footsteps **295**

pound the flagstones behind you as the Elemental lurches in pursuit. In return for its freedom, it The archway opens into an enclosed chamber from offers only a swift and savage death. Once more, which steps lead down. Advancing with drawn



sword to the top of the steps, you see a very long staircase leading right down into the bowels of the rock. Each step is inlaid with semi-precious stones; a tracery of gold lines adorns the walls. But Damontir ignored these treasures just as you do -

you both know that the greatest prize, the idol of Katak, awaits you far below. You begin the steep descent. Every ten metres or so you come to a landing. The staircase continues to reach down into the darkness ahead of you. You are about halfway between the second and third landings when you tread upon a step which gives slightly under your weight. There is an ominous click, followed by a rumbling from the top of the stairs.

You look back. A huge boulder, released from its hidden recess by the trap you have sprung, is rolling down the staircase towards you! As it thunders down, shaking the walls land causing dust to shower from the vaulted roof, you have no time to think - you must act now. Will you: Fall flat where you are? Turn to **46**

Run? Turn to **175**

Lie flat on the steps just below

the second landing? Turn to **7**

Use your Ring of Intangibility

(if you have one)? Turn to **25**

296

As you approach the robe, a cobra rears up from within and uncoils towards you like a black lightning flash. You bring your sword down to slice the

creature in two, but you are too slow to prevent it decide to leave them where they are and return to from sinking its fangs through the leather of your the vestibule to head west, turn to **119**.

boot and deep into your flesh. As you cry out, the double doors beside you suddenly fly open.

299

You can quickly drink your snakebite antidote The natives watch as you back away and vanish now, if you have any - it will neutralize the cobra's into the jungle with their Witchdoctor. You take venom. Otherwise you must deduct 7 VIGOUR

his bone wand away so that he cannot employ any points. If you are still alive, turn to **274**.

magic against you. He struggles with surprising vigour for one of his years, and you are careful to **297**

maintain a firm grip on him as you cut your way through the dense vegetation. Hunting cries break The poison that the Scorpion pumped into you through the verdant gloom behind you - the would kill most people. Pain contorts your muscles natives are giving chase. Although they are some and a horrible darkness clouds the edge of your distance away, it will not take them long to catch vision, but not for a second do you waver in your up. Your hostage is slowing you down too much.

struggle for life. Slowly - almost miraculously -

Before continuing on your way, will you let him go you rise to your feet. At last, as you give vent to a (turn to **246**) or will you kill him (turn to **276**)?

groan of pain and defiance, you feel your strength returning. Although still trembling from the **300**

poison's residual effects (reduce all your Combat Rolls by 1 from now on), you are alive and able to At last, after so many years, you have had your carry on. You clamber up out of the pit and leave revenge. Damontir sprawls lifeless at your feet.

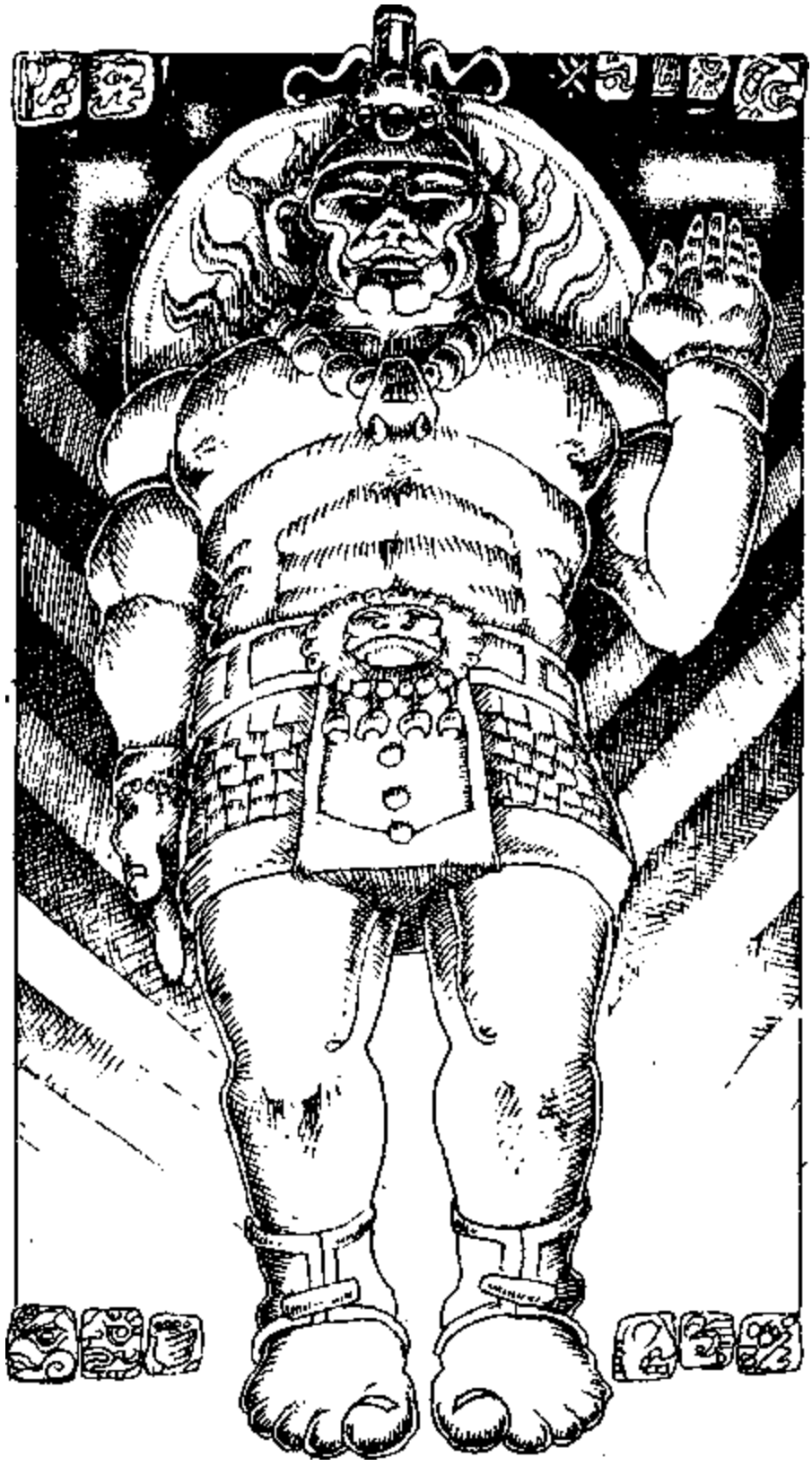
the room to make your way north. Turn to **152**.

The body does not crumble to dust like one of the Nightmare Guard. Damontir was not a supernatural figure as some believed, then - just a twisted, **298**

noxious little man. With your fury spent, he hardly To your disappointment, the new passage leads to seems now to have been worth the killing.

a dead end. You are about to retrace your steps You walk slowly over and stand before the idol.

when you happen to glance up and see a niche in It is considerably larger than you had imagined, the wall, slightly above head height. Standing on and since it must weigh close to two tonnes you are tiptoe, you see a pair of gold sandals. If you wish to at a loss to know how to move it. Perhaps, after all, take these and put them on, turn to **82**. If you it is better to leave it here. Katak is a forgotten god



whom history has passed by - to defile his memory by plundering the temple of its idol would be a churlish act, unworthy of a knight of Palados. You look into Katak's jewelled eyes and speak these sentiments aloud.

Suddenly you lose your balance and tumble into a whirlpool of colour and light. The idol and the cavern have vanished, but as you drift through a vortex of images you see the distant outline of your ship. As you watch, it leaps into focus. You seem to be plunging towards it. There is a sudden, brief burst of light and you find yourself standing on the creaking deck. The sailors are staring at you incre-dulously and the sight of their wide-eyed faces make you bellow with laughter. Your steward hurries forward and bows to you.

'My liege! We feared you had perished.' He looks up, as if to reassure himself that you are truly there. 'And now a great wonder has occurred for all to behold. A shaft of brilliant light descended from the top of yonder crystal spire, and when it faded you were standing here among us. And these items appeared also . . .'

You look where he is pointing. Behind you on the deck are a dozen large silver coffers. They are filled to overflowing with gems, medallions and artifacts of gold and other precious metals.

Still chuckling, you address your anxious steward, saying, 'Strange magic transported me here from the very bowels of the earth. The treasure is the gift of a god no longer worshipped.'

Perplexed, the old steward hobbles away to fetch

wine and prepare your meal. You lean on the rail.

The planking smells damp after the recent storm.

The sun is close to setting, painting the sky with streaks of red and turning the dunnish river to molten gold. You look around to see a faint rain-bow in the eastern sky.

'Prepare to set sail,' you tell the men. 'We're going home.'